

LUCY'S FRIEND.

BY BELLE WATERLOO.

JOHN GORDON was a stalwart young farmer with broad shoulders, big hands, long arms and legs, and feet that were remarkably well developed. His face was somewhat sunburnt and on either side was adorned by a slight growth of hair; his upper lip also was shadowy with coming events. The soft dusky appearance thus given to certain portions of his face, suggested the idea that he might have thrust it into a dusty cobweb and neglected to remove the particles that adhered to it. But notwithstanding his surplus of hands, feet, etc., and his lack of capillary attractions, John was not an ill-looking young man, and more than one of Eve's rustic daughters had covertly pictured him as the Adam of her paradise. John cared very little for the opinion of the daughters in the aggregate, yet he cared very much for what one particular daughter thought of him, and would have been infinitely happy to know that she painted him as the central figure of the Eden of her dreams. This being the case, he took advantage of every opportunity of enjoying her presence, and it is not unlikely that he used his influence to multiply their opportunities.

And the daughter? It is hard to say just what she thought of John, only that he was far short of her ideal Adam. She liked him very much, and sometimes thought how nice it would be to visit him after he had married some nice girl and was settled in housekeeping. Of course, she noticed that he came quite often to her uncle's house, and that he generally chose her as his companion to the various merry-makings of the village. But what of that? Other girls had their temporary beaux and enjoyed their admiration and adoration; why shouldn't she? The future did not trouble her.

Do you want to know who *she* was? Only Lucy Walton, the village music-teacher, aged nineteen; a pretty brown-eyed maiden, who earned her living by trying to bring to light and cultivate the latent talent of the young misses of the place. Lucy's home was not in the village, but in a large town some distance from it; hence she was regarded as quite an oracle. Her father being a stranger to energy and good management, Lucy was compelled to make their intimate acquaintance, and battle for her rights, whether she believed in "woman's rights" or not. And she never thought of defeat, but knowing that she must earn her bread and not neglect providing herself with the conventional figleaf—how the fashion of it has changed since first introduced by mother Eve!—she worked hard, did her duty, and was as contented as one can be who has aspirations for the future. It was only on rare occasions that she murmured of an unlucky star, or the lack of a silver mouth-piece on the occasion of her birth; and as unhappiness was the only result of these rebellions against Providence, like a sensible girl, she concluded it was best to make the best of everything and strove to make this the rule of her life. Lucy enjoyed country life keenly; its exhilaration, its freedom; and when she was a little girl she was as great a romp as ever climbed a tree or slide down hill on a board. She would still have enjoyed those same juvenile sports now that she had reached woman's estate, only it would have been considered unbecoming to her years, by the decorous people of the place. But her enjoyment of the country scenery was unlimited. Her walks through fields and woods were delightful, and after all, the horseback rides, wintergreening excursions and picnics were not such bad sub-

stitutes for the more stolerous pleasures
abe left behind with childhood.

It was summer when Lucy first went to the village to teach music; but Autumn, crowding Summer into the past, came with his harvest grains and fruits; and he, in his turn, was forced to store his products in barns and cellars, and give place to grizly old winter, who came skating in, bringing frost and snow sleighbells and gayety. Still, Lucy remained there, busy with work or busy with recreation, happy in the enjoyment of present pleasures. John Gordon was still her admiring friend, a fact sufficiently demonstrated to his companions by his taking her to a sleighride after every snowstorm, but proved to Lucy in a somewhat more lucid manner on one of those same rides, the last one for many a long year. It was such a lovely night! The snow was deep and soft, and O, so white, as the moon shone on it; and the moon smiled so complacently down, well satisfied that she was bleaching the snow into such silvery beauty. As John helped Lucy into the sleigh, she said:

"Now, John, you'll let me drive to-night, wont you? Under your care I am becoming quite skillful in the management of horses."

"That is just what I like, Lucy; to have you under my care," answered John, rather earnestly, as he seated himself by her side and placed the lines in her hands.

"You will have to keep a sharp lookout to-night," she replied, ignoring his seriousness, "for it is such good sleighing I may let the horses run away and upset the sleigh, or cause some other misfortune."

"I'll believe no such dark prophesying," he returned, laughing a little uneasily.

Then he tucked the robes more closely about her, placed one arm at the back of the cutter so as to make it easier for Lucy to lean against—you will understand how—and occupied his other hand in keeping Lucy's nuff warm till she should become tired of driving. As they glided rapidly along, Lucy was full of chatter. She asked questions and answered them herself, talked to and laughed at the horses, made comments on everything they passed, and in the course of half an hour discovered that her companion's share of the conversation had been very meagre, and that he seemed very absent-minded. She rallied him on being so absorbed in the *wool harvest*, and added:

"Unless you say something pretty soon, John, I shall think you have seen a vision and been struck dumb."

"I have been wanting to speak for some time," he answered, "but—I want a little advice, Lucy."

"I shall be happy to advise you on any subject, from love to war," she answered, laughing, "but I should prefer one of the subjects named, for then any measures I advised would be lawful."

"You can have your preference; the more amicable of those two subjects is the one. I am in love with a friend of yours, one who thinks as much of your opinion as she does of her own, so I have come to you for counsel in the matter."

Lucy was a little surprised at this announcement and wondered who the young lady was; but thought in a moment—"O, it is cousin Anna."

This cousin had paid Lucy a visit of two or three weeks, and John had openly expressed great admiration for her. So she answered John:

"I see; you want to use me as a medium through whom to read another person's mind; but I'm afraid that is beyond my ken. I haven't a bit of the gift of second sight."

"No; I come to you as an oracle, not as a medium; you will understand as I go on."

"That sounds like flattery; but about your sweetheart?"

"She is pretty, educated and accomplished, but not rich. I, by comparison, am awkward, though fairly educated, unpolished, but comfortably supplied with the treasure which moth and rust corrupt. Now, from what I've heard my sweetheart say—" with a significant look at Lucy—"I know that she would resign the treasure to moth and corruption for the sake of personal attributes, and I think she would be unsatisfied with a husband unless he possessed the polish and ease of manners found in travel, and a contact with the world. I am undecided whether to offer myself to her under the circumstances, and if she refuse me try and win her at all hazard; or to first seek good fortune in the world, and if successful then come and offer myself at her shrine. Will you tell me which to do, Lucy?"

"Yes; go to her at once and tell her of your regard for her; if she loves you she will take you as you are, and trust to the future to obviate all faults—should she

discover that you possessed any—knowing that there is no educator like a good and loving wife. If she cares for you only in a friendly way, she can but kindly tell you so. Then if you *can* and choose to win her regardless of all hinderances, why the more difficult the prize is to win, the more precious it is when won."

"Dear Lucy, your advice is just what I hoped it would be; and I shall follow it to the letter. You are the young lady of whom I have been speaking; did you not think so? Do you love me? Will you be the kind and loving wife? or can I have only the poor consolation of trying to win you?"

John's voice was so eloquently pleading, that Lucy almost said yes, from pure sympathy, before realizing what she was about to do; but just checking herself in time, she turned away from his earnest gaze and in a suffocated voice said:

"Let me think, John, let me think before I answer you."

In acquiescence he gently released her hand, which he had been holding in not the gentlest grasp, and he fell to thinking, too, while the sleighbells jingled and seemed monotonously to say, "What do you think? what do you think? what do you think?" and then to break out into sudden and boisterous mirth, as if in derision of what he thought. Lucy remained silent for some time and then said softly:

"John, my dear friend, I never thought you meant me, at all. I thought it must be cousin Annie that you were speaking of; I cannot be your wife; I only love you in a *friendly* way. For your sake, I'm sorry it is so, but I cannot help it. As for striving to win my love, I do not think I am worthy of such devotion. I hope, however, that you will, before long, gain the affections of some woman who is worthy of such generous love."

"I do hope to gain the affections of just such a woman," John replied, in such a calm, determined voice that Lucy felt almost as if she might as well say yes at once. John continued, "You remember I said I should follow your advice. To-morrow I shall make arrangements to go away. In a week I shall not be here; and not many years from now we shall meet again. Then I shall realize the happiness of which now I can only dream. I am sure you will not be married in the meantime; your own words encourage me to think so, though I can

hardly tell why. But I am persuaded that you and I are destined for each other."

Lucy made no reply. He had made his prophecy in such a deliberate tone of belief that it seemed to leave her passive in regard to what might happen in the future. The silence was unbroken by words till they reached Lucy's gate, when John gently lifted her from the sleigh, carried her in his arms to the door, and then, kissing her tenderly, he said, "God bless you, Lucy darling; Good-by!" and before she could answer he was gone.

She heard nothing more from John for three days; then she heard that he had left the village and gone no one seemed to know whither. Lucy was sorry that she did not know where he had gone. Not that she cared so very much, only she was interested in him as a friend, nothing more. And she did care nothing more for him then. When spring came she returned to her home in the city, where she taught music and did all other duties that fell to her lot in a cheerful if rather monotonous way. She had made music teaching her vocation, and constantly studied and improved in it till she was able to maintain herself in a very independent way, beside providing for future contingencies.

Thus several years passed by, and yet Lucy had heard nothing from John since the night he left her on her uncle's doorstep. She concluded, as a matter of course, that he had, if still alive, forgotten the resolutions he had made that night just as she expected he would. In the meanwhile she had not met her fate in the human form masculine, and wisely concluded that it was embodied in sheet music, exercise books, or some other convenient shape. But, dear reader, our friend Lucy knew no more about her future than we do of ours. Just when one's life seems most monotonous it may be on the eve of unusual perturbation. So Lucy began to think when her father came home one day and told the family that he had concluded to move West. He had taken one of those sudden freaks of roving that men who have never been very successful frequently take after getting well past middle life, when they ought to be looking toward a comfortable and quiet old age. Mr. Walton had decided to go to the "Golden State," and to take up his abode in Los Angeles, "the vale of the angels;" though it may be doubtful whether the in-

habitants of this city would be fair representations of the ideal winged cherubs with whom our childish imaginations were ever familiar, notwithstanding the fact that many "Celestials" dwell there. But such thoughts never puzzled the brain of Mr. Walton, and in the course of a couple of months from the time that he "declared his intentions" his family found themselves in Los Angeles. This place, like many other American cities, contains a population of the most diverse order; there one may find the jaunty Mexican, the superlatively economical Chinese, with his more progressive neighbor the Japanese, and also Europeans of every description, all happily conglomerating into an American city, and amalgamating a future generation of "American citizens" who will require a very complex rule of alligation to determine the proportion of national ingredients that make up their compound. In this mixed population Lucy had no difficulty in finding plenty who were fond of music, which is a great assimilator, and she soon had under her instruction quite a large class. The greater part of her pupils were young misses of from twelve to sixteen years, with nothing particularly distinguishing about them. But there was one, a young lady about nineteen years old, in whom Lucy took a great interest; her name was Ximena Lloyd. Her father had come to California from the East when quite young, and had here met Ximena's mother, a pretty American-Spanish girl with whom he had made haste to fall in love, and as his affection was reciprocated by the dark-eyed senora, a wedding soon ensued, a modest ranche was purchased, and Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd began housekeeping in the cosiest of adobe dwellings. But the uncertainty of earthly happiness is a lesson that requires constant repetition. Mr. Lloyd learned it in the death of his darling wife, when his little Ximena was only five years old. He then sent for his sister to come and live with him and care for his motherless girl.

Ximena from this time was brought up by her aunt in the most methodical New England fashion; and yet she never lost the pretty ways and manners she had inherited and learned from her mother. Mr. Lloyd was very fond of his daughter, and his dearest object in life was her welfare and education. Ximena had considerable musical talent, much to her father's delight, and he was always on the lookout to find good

teachers for her. Hearing Lucy sing at church one day, he was so pleased with her voice and manner that he inquired who she was; and when he learned that she was a music-teacher, he at once made arrangements to have her teach Ximena. Lucy and Ximena became warm friends, Ximena visiting Lucy often apart from lesson days, and Lucy occasionally visiting her pupil, who lived quite out in the suburbs of the town. During one of these visits, as the two came from a walk in the garden, Ximena ran to the piano, and seating herself, said:

"Now, Miss Walton, I will sing you a song that I do not think you have ever heard before." And she began to warble a cradle song in Spanish.

When she had finished, Lucy said:

"Why, Ximena, that is beautiful! It makes me think of the early spring birds that used to sing at home away East."

"Ah," returned Ximena, demurely, "that is just what Senor Gordon says."

Lucy was about to ask who "Senor Gordon" was, when Ximena was called away by her aunt. Lucy, thus left to herself, fell to thinking and speculating. The name of Gordon reminded her of one whom she used to know, and she wondered what had become of him. She wondered if she would like him any better *now*, if he should come to her and speak words of love, than she did in that time that seemed so very long ago. She didn't know, perhaps she might. She believed in *ideal* lovers then, and thought that some day *her* ideal lover, a man possessed of personal beauty, grace and courage, and who should be all goodness, honor and wisdom, would come to claim her as his bride; and she, recognizing in him the one for whom she was created and who was created for her, *she* would at once acknowledge and receive him. But she was older and wiser now, and saw that those fancies of early youth were *only* fancies, and could never be anything else. And she knew that if she were ever married her husband would be nothing approaching her ideal, though he might be a more fitting mate for a mortal. She accepted these facts as inevitable, and actually indulged in a pleasant little daydream, in which her former lover figured quite conspicuously, although she had not heard from him in years, and did not know but he might have passed into the beyond. As the days went by Lucy's thoughts were

somewhat diverted from their accustomed channels by the acquaintance of Campbell Granger, a reasonably rich bachelor, who had business relations with her father. He used frequently to be at Mr. Walton's on business, and as a matter of consequence met Miss Lucy. The natural result of these meetings was that Campbell wished to make friendly calls, etc., etc. We all know where such etc's, would be likely to lead. In this case Campbell was led to fall deeply in love with Lucy, while she was led to become an enthusiastic friend of Campbell, if nothing more. Mr. Granger was fine-looking, generous and agreeable, yet it seemed to Lucy as if he were not quite the person whom she could take to love better than any one in the world "till death do us part." In some way thoughts of John Gordon would intrude themselves on her mind even against her wishes, and she kept on wondering where he was and how he had fared in all the time since they parted.

John, however, had stood in small need of commiseration. After the unhappy termination of his *affaire de cœur* with Lucy, he left his native town and went to Astoria in Oregon. He had an uncle living there, who had often written to him, saying, "If you will only come to Oregon, my dear John, and invest what money you have with me, your fortune is made." But after an association of four or five months, it became very evident to John that his own ideas of making money differed largely from his uncle's. In fact, he found him to be a man like unto Jacob's uncle Laban, more disposed to get gain for himself than to promote the welfare of his nephew. So John, not feeling inclined to fight for his rights, as did Jacob, or perhaps feeling less sure of success, concluded it would be for his profit to bid adieu to his selfish old kinsman, and went to San Francisco. He had but just entered its "Golden Gate" when he met an old friend of his father who had for many years been living in the southern part of California, engaged in cultivating oranges and lemons. He was now compelled to return East, and he had sold all his property with the exception of one large orange grove, which he now offered to John on the most favorable terms, for the sake of "auld lang syne." John accompanied his friend to his home, and finding everything satisfactory, made the purchase of the grove, and immediately settled upon his new prem-

ises. The orchard was a fine one, in a bearing condition, and was pleasantly situated in the suburbs of Los Angeles. The trees hung full of rich yellow fruit, and seemed to hold out a golden prospect for the future. He was bounded on one side by a small stream of water, and on the other by the farm of Mr. Lloyd. To this kind neighbor John was more than a little indebted for advice in regard to the cultivation and disposal of his oranges, and for many acts of friendliness, so sweet to a stranger in a strange land. John had as far as possible returned these kindnesses, and was held in high esteem by the Lloyd family, especially by Ximena; and John was by no means indifferent to her beauty and her preference, even if he appeared so. He had been in California six years at the time of Mr. Walton's arrival in the State. In this time, he had, by good management and close industry, acquired a snug fortune; and had substituted for the little adobe dwelling, in which he had kept bachelor's hall, a picturesque stone house, not very large, but O, so cosy! and a stone house had always been his ideal. It is so satisfactory to realize an ideal! In its interior arrangements this house had many peculiar conveniences, so strictly feminine that they plainly showed the builder was not contemplating bachelorhood for the future. In truth, John was now ready to return to his native State to search out the love of his youth who had inspired him to make exertions that had proved so successful, and to whom he was still loyal. He had written to her several times, but his letters, after going the rounds of the dead letter office, always returned to him. Lately he had thought even more of Lucy than usual, and wondered if she were still unmarried, and if she remembered how positively he had told her that he thought they would meet again, and then not to part.

It cannot be denied, for John was perfectly human, that the question sometimes came to him whether he had not been rash in his declaration that he would win her at all hazard. Not that he regretted it, or wavered from his determination; but when he saw Ximena Lloyd nearly every day—now grown up to womanhood, and just the age of Lucy as he remembered her—he could not help thinking what a pretty substitute she would make for Lucy, in case he should never succeed in winning her. And

I doubt not but most young gentlemen would have thought the same. Lucy scarcely ever heard the name of Gordon from Ximena; for notwithstanding that John was much her senior, and generally treated her in an elder-brotherly way, he was the hero of her dreams, and she almost fancied that other people could read her own tender thoughts whenever she mentioned his name, and it was an unusual bestowal of confidence, for her, to say what she did regarding John's admiration for her singing. Lucy had no idea while visiting Ximena that she was breathing the same atmosphere that surrounded her old lover. John and Lucy had both changed much in six years. She had developed into a comely woman of twenty-five; her face expressed more character than it did before she left her teens; her form and movements were more dignified, her hair had taken a darker shade, and her eyes were deeper, if they were not quite so sunny as they used to be. Her voice was very sweet and clear, and carried purpose in every accent; it was her greatest charm. John had changed even more than Lucy in his appearance. The boyish diffidence had given place to manly self-dependence; the gossamery whiskers of his youth were changed into a luxuriant brown beard and heavy drooping mustache, that added much to his manly beauty. His former awkwardness, by intercourse with many different people and a knowledge of the world, was metamorphosed into ease of manners. His gain had been as great in person as in purse, and surely Lucy could not be indifferent to him now if she could see him.

It had been a lovely day, the first anniversary of Lucy's arrival in Los Angeles. The orange groves were white with blossoms that were full of suggestions to the imaginative. The air was soft and sweet like a gaseous perfume, and when breathed seemed to diffuse itself through the body in cool delicious little currents, like some magical life elixir. Mr. Granger had called to take an evening walk with Lucy. She noticed that he was not quite as placid as usual, and she inferred from sundry anxious glances he gave her, and from his rather nervous air, that he might have something important to say to her before the walk was over. And should she allow him to say it? She did not know, and so concluded to let events shape themselves. They sauntered

on from street to street, enjoying the beauty of the evening, and making commonplace remarks about the persons and things they saw on the way, just as people always do when their minds are occupied with some subject that is not commonplace. They had reached the suburbs of the town, and were passing an orange grove, in the border of which stood an unusually pretty stone house, when Lucy said:

"Don't you think that is a beautiful grove, Campbell? And that house! it is quite my ideal of a home."

"Yes, I think they are both very handsome," he replied; "and their owner is equally pleasant to look upon. I am a little acquainted with him; he is a splendid fellow."

"Who is their owner? I meant to ask Ximena when I was there a few days ago, but forgot it. It appears so quiet around the house that I didn't know but it was inhabited by ghosts; only the gardens are too well kept, and show that more muscle has been employed than is generally ascribed to ghosts. But please answer my question; for what you have said about the owner has stimulated my curiosity all the more."

"My dear Miss Lucy," returned Campbell, laughing, "I will answer your question as soon as you give me the opportunity. His name is Gordon — John Gordon; he came here five or six years ago, and has done so well in his business that he is now quite rich. There he is now, in Mr. Lloyd's. I should think you would have met him there. He visits the pretty Ximena, I have heard."

Lucy was surprised when she learned who owned the house. Turning her eyes to the window, she saw John Gordon, her John Gordon, standing by the piano, singing a song with Ximena. She replied to Campbell that it was not strange that she had not met him, as she had visited at Mr. Lloyd's but two or three times. As Lucy and her companion passed the house, both John and Ximena looked up, the former so interrogatively that Lucy blushed confusedly, the latter smiling and nodding. Lucy could plainly hear the words they were singing:

"Enough after absence to meet me again,

Thy steps still with ecstasy move;

Enough that those dear sober glances retain

For me the kind language of love."

They were part of an old song that she and John had often sung together, and she

had lent it to Ximena a few days before, because she thought the tune "so pretty! it seems to say more than the words do."

"Mr. Gordon is a rather nice-looking man," said Lucy; "and I remember now of having heard Ximena mention him. They make quite a tableau. It's nothing serious?"

Campbell smiled, and said, carelessly:

"I presume it may be, but I don't know."

Lucy had asked her question with as much seeming carelessness as it had been answered, but in truth she was jealously interested in all that related to John, and thought:

"I know now how to answer Campbell if he should say anything unusual to-night; but O, I hope he will not."

But Campbell did say something to her before they parted that evening. He told her a pretty story with a question in it; and, poor Lucy! she knew that she must say no to the question, for she found where her heart was when she heard John singing that old song. And Campbell, good kind Campbell, was cruelly hurt at Lucy's seemingly ungenerous answer, and at the first sharp aching of the wound he rebelled with a bitterness of which Lucy had thought him incapable. But when she, in sympathy for his suffering, and remorse at having encouraged even a friendship for him, revealed the state of her own affections, he became his own kind self again, and parted from her as a friend and fellow-sufferer from the natural ills of life. This was well for him, for there was a pretty little physician not far off who would heal his wounds before another year passed by, and heal them so perfectly that not even a scar would be left to tell of former conflict.

On this same night in which Campbell Granger revealed the secrets of his heart to Lucy Walton, John Gordon called to spend the evening with Ximena Lloyd, and to say good-by to her. He found her seated on the piano stool, idly dreaming. She turned to see who entered the room, and seeing who it was, she turned to the piano again, and without a word began playing, soft and low, a nocturne, one of his favorites. When it was finished, he said:

"Ximena, you must sing all your songs for me to-night, for I shall not hear them again soon. To-morrow I am going East, to be gone for some time."

Ximena's face expressed great surprise at hearing this, but she only said, with assumed gayety:

"Of course, Senor Gordon, I will sing for you, and I suppose I must give all my songs an undertone of sadness because you are going away."

"Certainly, that will make your voice more charming than usual, if that were possible, fair donna."

"Ah, you only flatter me, senor."

There was just a little trembling in her voice as she said this, but she hoped that John did not notice it; and made haste to hide the emotion in a song. But John did observe it, and concluding that it would be better for both of them that Ximena should know *why* he went East, he said, after she finished the song, "If you will listen to me for a little while, Ximena, I have a story to tell you."

"I am all attention," she answered, gayly, having recovered from her emotion; and she leaned on the piano, with her head resting in her hand, in a graceful attitude.

John then told her about Lucy Walton, how he had become acquainted with her, and how she had won his strong youthful love, and then, when he sought for her love in return, she had nothing for him but friendship; and then how he had declared that he would win her love at all hazard, that they would meet again, and then she would become his wife. As he repeated this story he seemed to live it again. He was no longer in a half-tropical climate, talking to a tropical-looking young maiden, but was gliding over the moonlighted snow, breathing the crisp air of a rigorous climate, with a plump New England girl tucked up in the robes beside him. Ximena, looking at and listening to him, realized his devotion to Lucy, and all the happy hopes she had entertained for him she folded up and laid on her upper mental shelf, along with the very few other relics she had accumulated in her short lifetime. The events of life would gradually scatter a dust over them, till nothing but their outlines would be visible. John concluded his story by saying:

"Now I am going to find Lucy and to fulfil my words."

"But you will not go," said Ximena; "I will save you the trouble of a journey, Senor Gordon."

"How?" answered John; "I don't understand you. Lucy is not dead? I'm sure she is not dead."

Ximena did not answer immediately.

She thought of her own pain, and thought it but just that he should suffer a little, too. But before his appealing look her weak malice quickly changed into pity, and it was with pleasure, like bestowing a gift, that she said:

"No, Senor Gordon, Lucy is not dead nor married; she is my music-teacher, and I see her every week. Here is a song she lent me; she said it was given her by a friend, long ago, and she sat still and looked dreamy for a long time after she said it. You must be that friend, for under her name it says from J. G."

John took the music, and in one corner found the name "Lucy," written in a stiff unbusiness-like hand, followed by his own bold initials. He smiled as he read it, and remembered when he gave it to Lucy, and when they first sang together. Turning to Ximena he said:

"You are right in your supposing, little friend, and I am very grateful for what you have told me. Now let us sing this song together."

Ximena assented, and it was while they were singing it that Lucy and Campbell passed the house and saw them. When John saw his friend Granger walking with Lucy, whom he immediately recognized, a mannish jealousy disturbed his heart, and he thought, "She is probably engaged to him, and will marry him." But when he saw the rosy blush that responded to his look of inquiry, he interpreted it so flatteringly to himself that the "green-eyed monster" parted company with him immediately, and the rest of the evening was spent very pleasantly.

When John bade Ximena good-night, he said, "You have saved me a journey, Ximena, so I hope we may have the pleasure of spending an evening with you soon."

"Yes," she replied, smiling, "I shall be glad to see you and Mrs. Gordon at any time."

Ximena then returned to the parlor, and sitting down to the piano she softly wailed forth her disappointment in a mournful little song. After the song she shed a few tears, made a few stern and generous resolves, which she kept, and then went, like a sensible girl that she was, to sleep and pleasant dreams. The next morning found John at Mr. Walton's gate at an unusually

early hour, even for morning calls. But the wings of love are supposed to be a rapid method of transportation, and perhaps he reached there earlier than he intended, though certainly not earlier than he desired. In his hand he carried a beautiful bouquet of orange-blossoms, gathered from his own trees. As he entered the gate and walked toward the door, he looked up and saw Lucy standing at the window; she smiled at him and turned to go to the door, but before she reached it she found him confronting her in the middle of the room. He handed her his bouquet, saying:

"Lucy, I have brought you some orange-blossoms; will you wear them for me?"

Her hand trembled as she took the flowers, and she held them up to her lips, partly as a caress and partly to hide her confusion; then she answered, blushing, peeping over her bouquet:

"Yes, John, I will wear them for you, and you are the only one for whom I could wear orange-blossoms."

John seemed quite satisfied with this answer, and Lucy had set such a pretty example in caressing the blossoms with her lips that he was constrained to caress the smiling face that looked up from his arms a moment later in the same manner.

A month later found Lucy and John figuring as bride and bridegroom at a happy wedding, while Ximena and Campbell kindly took the parts of bridesmaid and groomsman, parts they performed with great credit to themselves, considering the martyrdom each was supposed to be undergoing. At every wedding, it is said, another is made. Ximena and Campbell were meeting on conjectural ground. What might not be the consequences? And if they were the ones who were doomed at this wedding, it would be very foolish for them to strive against fate—and inclination, too; so we need only add that John and Lucy now walk under the shade of their own orange grove, or sit in the perfume of the lemon trees that grow beside their porch, while they frequently converse about their nearest neighbors and dearest friends, Campbell and Ximena Granger, who were married just six months later than themselves, and whose prospects for a life of happiness are equally as flattering as their own.

MAJOR BATH'S SENSATION.

BY MIRIAM ALLEN.

ONE snowy day last winter Major Francis Bath walked into the Worcester depot, and purchased a ticket for a certain way station which I had better not name. Having established himself in a car, he fumed and fidgeted about the stormy weather and the crowd of passengers; and, in fact, a thousand other inconveniences which an irritable temperament would not fail to discover.

His frowns expanded into smiles presently, by the remembrance of an unread letter which he had taken a few minutes before from the post-office. It is necessary for our purpose that we should forego all courtesy and look over the major's epaulettes as he peruses each tiny page. It is only a sister's letter, but full enough of adoration to be a veritable "love-letter." It is quite evident that the fair writer regards Major Bath as the most magnificent officer in the Union army.

"I know, dear Frank," writes the young lady, "that you will make a *great sensation!* You were always handsome, but set off with brass buttons, you will be perfectly irresistible. I almost wish you were not my brother, so that I could fall in love with you. It will be very inconvenient to have all the young ladies in the village dying for you, and I write now to prepare you to devote yourself only to *one*."

"There never could be anything more fortunate, dear Frank! Our honorable and rich neighbors, the Kelseys, have just received a rare legacy from Germany in the form of a lovely young lady, Miss Elsie Schaeffer. You may have heard the old scandal about Dr. Kelsey's only child, Fanny—how she eloped with her music-teacher, Wolfgang Schaeffer. They fled to Germany, and how they fared the Kelseys never knew, for the few letters poor Fanny dared send home were returned unopened. In later years, Dr. Kelsey repented his unfor-giveness, and tried to find information of his daughter; but it was of no avail, and he had given up all hope of ever knowing her fate, when suddenly—just like a romance, Frank!—appears this lovely orphan grandchild, with her father's bewitching eyes, her mother's sprightly ways, and, above all, a pretty little inheritance from the Schaeffers of a hundred thousand! Is not that a catch, and aren't you a lucky fellow to possess such beauty and treasure?"

"All the awkward preliminaries are arranged. Our provident parents and the Kelseys have decided that a matrimonial alliance between our families is very desirable. Miss Elsie has been apprised, and all that remains for you is to march right into the Kelsey mansion as an accepted lover."

"I shall not describe 'the fair lady,' but if she does not satisfy even your most exacting fancy, I shall be much mistaken. You will want to hasten the wedding, for the fair Elsie is very attractive, and has already gained many admirers. I think she remains unaffected—unless it is by Friedrich Wiesser, a young German, who unfortunately took passage in the same steamer that brought Elsie to America.

"I trust it is only a girlish *penchant*. Her grandparents disapprove it strongly, and blame Barbara Hoffman for encouraging this young stripling's attentions. This Barbara is a servant in Dr. Kelsey's family, and was Elsie's escort, protectress, or whatever you call it, from Hamburg; and a precious vigilant one she must have been, to allow the beautiful heiress to receive attentions from a beardless boy like Friedrich. No matter! You are the approved lover, and Elsie will be enraptured with you at first sight. I heartily congratulate you, Frank, and I wish I were Elsie.

"Come, haste to the wedding."

"Your loving sister, JULIA."

This letter was folded with a degree of complacency hardly to be imagined by one not in like circumstances. Major Bath's next performance was to raise his majestic proportions to the altitude of six feet five, so that he might add to his already pleasant reflections that of a car *looking-glass*. He saw depicted on its clear surface a dark handsome face, faultless in feature, if not in expression, a ferocious-looking mustache and silky beard, supported by a proud neck and military shoulders. All these the major regarded with infinite satisfaction, and then lounged upon his seat with the proud consciousness that no "stripling" like this audacious Friedrich could compete with him.

It would be a delightful though somewhat lengthy task to review the major's dreams. His curiosity to behold the fair Elsie was intense; but were she decidedly plain in appearance, she was invested with a *hundred thousand* charms, which, considering the state of Major Bath's gambling debts, would make Miss Schaeffer quite irresistible in his eyes.

"But Julia says she is lovely," he soliloquized. "Julia has good taste. I wish, though, she had just mentioned my wife's style of beauty. I hope she is tall and imposing. I hate these short women! They

look ridiculously tugging at a tall husband's arm in the street, or promenading a church aisle to be married."

Married! The magic word painted at a dash the brilliant wedding scene—the delicious sense of possession in "Elsie;" and, above all, in a princely Schaeffer inheritance. Already could the major read in a morning paper the distinguished marriage announcement—"In the Church of St. Stephen, by the Right Reverend Bishop Somebody, Major Francis Bath, of the Blankth Regiment of Mass. Vol., to Elsie, daughter of the late Wolfgang Schaeffer, Esq., and granddaughter of the Honorable Peleg Kelsey, M.D."

The major was not usually an imaginative man, but just now it was a very active fancy that sketched innumerable delicious scenes. Now it was a vision of the young *fraulein* rushing to his arms with smiles and blushes. No—he would prefer her more modest, on the whole. A tall imperious beauty, who must be wooed—whose fiery spirit it would be worth one's while to break.

Vision followed vision, each more charming than the last. Meanwhile, the train had been rushing over its accustomed track, dropping suburban residents at their respective stations. Not many miles had been measured, but the inconvenient crowd had already dispersed. In fact, there was but one other person remaining in the car with our hero. This person was suitably clad in a dark winter dress, "waterproof," and modest bonnet, whose heavy veil shielded the face from curious observers. Major Bath was "a curious observer" just then, and when the lady changed her position by the door for a seat near the stove, he became suddenly chilly, buttoned his elegant military overcoat closer about his manly figure, and finding that insufficient, followed the example of his companion, and sought the stove.

The young woman, who could not fail to notice the imposing major, was undoubtedly gratified when he condescended with his own hands to replenish the fire, and then kindly remarked:

"I trust, miss, you are not to travel far this stormy night?"

There was a moment's embarrassed hesitancy, then the young lady spoke in broken English:

"I will go only till the next station."

"That is also the end of my journey," remarked the major, pleasantly, starting a little at the foreign accent he had just heard.

"Are you visiting in the village?" he inquired, after a little.

"No sir—I live there."

"Ah!"

"At Dr. Kelsey's."

"My Elsie!" almost burst from the major's lips, but he was a wily officer, and sagely concluded not to commit himself—to act the captivating gallant, but to make no further inquiries. The train soon reached the next station, and the major hastened to precede the lady. He haughtily waved aside the conductor, and claimed *his* right of assisting his companion to descend.

The snow had changed to rain, and fortunately the young lady had no umbrella. The major was in luck, and his was instantly spread. His unoccupied arm was then most graciously offered for the young lady's support.

"If you live at Dr. Kelsey's," said he, irresistibly, "we are neighbors, and must be friends. Allow me to escort you. It is very dark and stormy."

How could the young lady refuse, especially when she was confident that this was the Major Bath whose praises were daily echoed at the Kelseys?

The young officer set forth, the proudest and happiest man alive. The noisy wind prevented much conversation, but it was bliss enough to feel that he was shielding Elsie Schaeffer from the storm.

"Whatever her face may be," he thought, "she is just right for height—comes up to my shoulder, and that is really quite respectable for a woman."

It was a prosperous star that overlooked the major's destiny that night. He was favored with a glimpse of his companion's face. Reaching the piazza of the Kelseys, a brilliant glow from the open fire within gleamed through the clear windows. Just at this moment the young lady flung back her veil, revealing spirited black eyes, and a face, not *spirituelle*, but of healthy rosy beauty, quite after the major's fancy. Thoroughly impassioned now, he essayed to speak, but his companion, perhaps divining his intention, coquettishly prevented further gallantry by a courteous "Good-night, sir. Many thanks!" and disappeared within the door.

The major bore the slight disappointment as well as possible, and hastened home to recount his amazing good fortune to his sympathizing sister.

After receiving the congratulations of his family, next morning he set forth to pay his respects to Miss Schaeffer.

The storm of the preceding night had passed away, and the new phase of weather was mild, soft—deliciously like April. Open doors and windows attracted the unwonted agreeableness of out-doors to the overheated rooms within. The Kelseys, like the rest of the villagers, were luxuriating in the fine weather, and as Major Bath walked up the avenue, he saw the hall door flung wide open. It afforded a pretty view just then; for, dancing down the broad staircase was a *petite* girlish figure, swinging a gay feather duster from her little hand. This useful implement, and a little snowwhite apron, seemed to mark the young woman as a housemaid. She approached the door as if it were her accustomed duty to admit visitors; but not often such a magnificent visitor as this, spoke a sudden blush that stained her delicate complexion.

"Will you walk in, sir?" said the pretty maid.

"Thank you," responded the major, promptly accepting the invitation. "I wish to see Miss Schaeffer. Is she disengaged this morning?"

"Miss Schaeffer?" stammered the girl, while something very like mischief danced in the blue eyes.

"Yes — Miss Schaeffer!" repeated the major, impatiently. "Don't you comprehend? What am I to understand that you are waiting for, my dear?"

This insolence seemed quite unwonted to the girl. A look of superiority invested her at once with a dignity which the feather duster and work-apron did not diminish in the least.

The major, surprised at her remarkable prudery, proceeded to explain:

"I walked home with Miss Schaeffer last night from the depot, and called to see how she does *this morning*. Be lively, my pretty girl!"

The little maid crossed the carpet with alacrity, saying, "Here is the young lady you escorted last evening!" Then opening the breakfast-room door, disclosed a stout ruddy-faced Germau girl, rubbing the silver.

An awful revelation dawned upon the major. He discovered suddenly that the sprite disguised with a white apron and duster was the real Miss Schaeffer, and the heroine of one night's bright dreams, the red-faced Barbara Hoffman, was a common servant.

A glance of irrepressible mirth from the lovely Elsie convinced him that he had been victimized. He was baffled, disappointed—thrown off his guard. He exclaimed, foolishly:

"Miss Schaeffer! I have lost nothing! I never did like short women!" Then followed a most uncalled-for and ungentlemanly torrent of abuse, which revealed how base a nature may be concealed in a princely form and attractive garb.

Poor Elsie, terrified, clung to Barbara, whose vehement German remonstrances Major Bath neither understood nor regarded. Dr. Kelsey was away, but Mrs. Kelsey's age and sex should have shamed the young man. Nothing stopped his outrageous spleen, until a most opportune visitor, passing the window, and glancing at the stormy scene within, rushed to the rescue.

This was young Friedrich Wiesser, and "stripling" as Major Bath supposed him, there was something imposing in that ath-

letic figure and fresh dauntless face that made the cowardly officer shrink.

"He does not like short women," exclaimed Friedrich, scornfully. "Come to me, *Mignon*—I will protect you!"

Elsie never looked fairer than when blushing, but no longer alarmed, she rested secure in her lover's arms. At this moment the major intensely coveted her dainty beauty, regardless of the "Schaeffer inheritance"—but it was too late.

The proud officer "beat an inglorious retreat" from the Kelsey mansion, and his native village, as well. A sensation he had made, truly, but alas! not the sensation that his fond sister anticipated. It was hopeless to effect reconciliation between the two families. The Baths always believed, most incorrectly, that their son's mistake was a predetermined plot of that impish Elsie Schaeffer. The Kelseys would never pardon the insolent words flung at their grandchild.

Three persons, however, rejoiced in the proverb—verified in *their* case—"All's well that ends well." These three, it is not necessary to say, were Friedrich Wiesser, his beautiful betrothed, and the faithful Barbara, who rejoiced in her young friends' happiness.

MARCH WINDS.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

OUR house was getting to be decidedly down town. Stores were creeping up round us, horsecars went tinkling through the street, and great ugly brick blocks took the place of the pleasant old-fashioned gardens that but yesterday made such a grateful show of green leaves, and flowers, and grass to passers-by. Our garden was left still, but Uncle John said that it was a shocking piece of extravagance to keep it, or the house either, and was continually advising us to sell. Lou and I were obliged to pinch a good deal, to be sure, in order to make both ends meet; and for the price our estate would bring us we should be able to purchase a much more suitable abode for us either up town or in the suburbs, and have a good substantial sum left besides. But we could not bear to think of leaving the old place where father and mother were married, and where they both died, after living there so many happy years; where we were born and spent such a happy child-

hood. Every room in the great rambling old house was dear to us, every tree in the garden, and the rows of gooseberry and currant bushes, the tulip beds under the sunny wall, the sweet-scented roses, and daffodils and pinks. Dinah, our old black servant, loved it as well as we did, and we three lived there alone, after a very contented and jolly fashion. Our friends all lived a good ways off, but we did not mind that. Neither Lou nor I cared much for society. We had our books, our music, our house-keeping and our dreams—the latter always taking up a good part of any young woman's existence. Then Lou was something of an artist, and was able to prevent any loneliness from creeping into her leisure, by sketching a flower, or some pretty little scene from the window. Beaux had never been much in our line. Lou was a beauty, but she was not at all susceptible, and turned a cold shoulder on all her admirers.

It was a fearfully blustering March morn-

ing. The tree branches snapped and creaked, shutters slammed, panes of glass smashed, doors banged, and the wind whistled down the chimney and tore round the corners with the greatest fury. Lou and I had a great pile of scarlet coals in our library grate, and were cosily seated there, Lou at her drawing, and I with my embroidery, when suddenly we heard a great crash, and rushing to the window, found that the sign on the fancy goods store opposite had blown down, and a man who was passing by at the time had been hurt. We caught a glimpse of him lying there on the sidewalk, pale and bleeding from a wound in the temple; then, in the twinkling of an eye, a great crowd hid him from our sight, and the street was a perfect scene of confusion.

"Poor fellow!" said Lou, pityingly. "I am afraid he is dead. Where will they take him? If he is alive, he surely ought to be taken to some house as soon as possible. He could not be properly cared for in a store."

"Certainly not," said I; "and as our house is the nearest, we ought to signify our willingness to having him brought here." And just then Dr. Willoughby, an old friend of the family, beckoned me to come to the door; and when I did so, told me that he had taken the liberty to order the injured man to be taken there immediately, as it would be dangerous to try to move him as far as the hotel under the circumstances.

Lou shivered a little, and covered her face with her hands when they bore him past our door and up the staircase into the comfortable and cosy guest-chamber; but I had strong nerves, and sought his side at once, anxious to see if he were any one I knew, and to find out the extent of his injuries. Afterwards she declared that it was not nervousness on account of the man's injuries which caused her to shiver; it was because she felt sure the moment he was carried across the threshold that he was her fate.

He was unconscious, and I could hardly believe that he still breathed. Good old Dr. Willoughby was bending over him with a very serious face.

"Too good a head to be battered up in this way," said he, as I approached. Then Dr. Clarke, the surgeon from up town, having been hurriedly sent for, appeared, and the two held a long consultation over him.

He *had* a good head, surely. It was of antique mould, and had an expression of much nobility. His face was good, also—handsome even now, though the features were so pale and set, and pinched with pain. It was evident that he was a stranger in town; no one remembered to have seen him before. His age was probably about thirty, and Lou discovered a crest on the ring which he wore on his little finger as soon as she found courage to glance at him.

"But he doesn't need that to prove that he is of noble extraction," she whispered me behind the doctor's back.

"Lou, your head is crammed full of romances," I returned. "What is it to us whether he is of noble extraction or not? Poor fellow! I only hope that he will not die on our hands. How dreadfully his friends would feel if they knew of his condition—his mother, his wife, his sisters!"

"But he hasn't any wife," she persisted. "I am perfectly sure of that."

I opened my eyes at her with a fear that she had suddenly lost her mind.

"What do you think of the case?" she asked Dr. Clarke, whom she met on his way down stairs an hour later.

"Very serious," he said, shaking his head. "There are chances for his recovery, but it is doubtful. I have found out his address by means of cards in his pockets, but it seems that he is an Englishman, living in London, and it seems unlikely that any of his friends will be able to reach him, though I shall make haste to publish the accident in the newspapers."

"But there *is* a chance of his recovery! Helen, I'm convinced that he'll get well. When I saw him in New York last week, I was sure that I should see him again. I was sure that I should be acquainted with him sometime, and now I am sure that I shall know him many years."

"Did you see him in New York?" I exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes, and it seems so strange," she said. "It was just such a day as this, a wild blustering March day, and walking up Fifth Avenue my veil blew off, and lodged gracefully across a gentleman's face who was walking just behind me. I turned, of course, to recover the provoking thing, and found him making bewildered efforts to pull it from his eyes. But before he succeeded in doing so the wind took it again, and he had a frantic chase for it down the street.

Finally it lodged in a tree, and he hooked it down with his cane and returned it to me, quite out of breath. As he did so our eyes met, and we both burst into a fit of laughter. Of course I thanked him for his trouble, and said that the veil wasn't worth such an effort, and the like. But that wasn't *all* of the meeting, Helen, though as far as words are concerned, he said nothing at all. It was evident that he felt the same thrill of prophecy that I did."

I had never heard Lou talk such nonsense before, and expressed my disapproval by maintaining a severe silence.

There was no change in Mr. John Gilbert's condition that day. Dr. Willoughby remained at his bedside until late at night, and then Dinah, who was a famous nurse, and delighted beyond measure with the importance of her position, took his place. Lou, with the best of directions for change of medicines and the like through the night, reclined on a sofa in the next room, and tiptoed in where he lay in that deathly stupor every hour or so, so as to be sure that everything was right, though Dinah was always sure to remember.

The next day he opened his eyes, and looked about him with a blank stare; then after that he grew delirious, and raved fearfully for hours and hours together. But even in his wildest moods he seemed to be conscious of Lou's presence. Her touch soothed him, and he would take nothing from other hands than hers. On the fourth day Dr. Willoughby pronounced him better. He had slept quietly during the night, his pulse was beating more naturally, and his face was losing its expression of pain.

Lou and I were sitting by his bedside, discussing his features with the greatest freedom, when he suddenly opened his eyes and fixed them on my sister's somewhat guilty countenance.

"Ah!" he said, in a tone of recognition. "Then I haven't been dreaming, after all. I have been conscious that an angel was near me all the while; but tell me, am I in heaven?"

Lou's cheeks grew crimson. I was very much inclined to laugh, for it never seemed to me that Lou, with her piquant nose and dancing brown eyes, ever looked very much like an angel, but more like a handsome, saucy and wilful young woman. I assured him that he was still upon earth, but that he had been very ill, and advised him to be

very quiet and try to go to sleep again. He obeyed like an infant, and was soon in the depths of the same peaceful slumber.

"Poor fellow, he isn't himself yet," whispered Lou, with an air of wishing to be contradicted on the subject.

When he did come to himself he was not much more reasonable. He was weak, and childish, and fretful, and was restless and miserable if Lou did not keep Dinah company in the continual watch by his bedside, and declared that the medicine would do him no good unless she gave it to him.

"Sick or well, he's in lub wid Miss Lou," remarked Dinah, shaking her sage head; "and if Dinah's eyes habn't got so old that they can't see straight, Miss Lou aint far from bein' dat way wid him, either. And we dunno noffin about him, Miss Helen, ony he 'pears like somebody. Still, 'pearances am deceitful!"

I never doubted but that Mr. John Gilbert was a gentleman after my first glance at him, however, and was no more uneasy on that score than I was after securing every proof possible that he was of the highest respectability, the *only son* of a wealthy English squire who had lately died, doing this country on a pleasure trip. He hadn't a relative in the world, and I quite pitied him, poor fellow, he seemed to feel it so much. So did Lou.

But as he grew better and stronger he grew sad and despondent — wished those days could last forever, and complained that the doctor was hurrying him into getting well so fast. Matters seemed to be going on strangely between him and Lou, and I felt a strange foreboding of evil whenever I regarded my sister's radiant face, and saw how this stranger was absorbing her every thought. As for him, his eyes followed her everywhere she went with a wistful half-tender expression, and one day he said to me, watching her as she left the room, as if she had some connection with the wish, "O Miss Helen, if the March winds had only stranded me here two years before, what a happy man I should be!"

I did not ask him why, but afterwards I remembered this remark, and understood its significance. He was quite well now, and was going to leave us that day. Lou and he had been alone in the library half the morning, and I found her in her own room, with her head buried in the pillows, looking like a ghost.

"He is engaged to be married, Helen. He told me the whole truth. He cares for me—he says that he fell in love with me at a glance that day in New York; but I bade him go and marry *her*, because it is the only honorable thing he can do. But it is very, very hard. O Helen, it is so hard! I shall never see him again."

He was waiting down stairs to bid me good-by. I felt unreasonably angry with him for bringing so much trouble into our midst, and was prepared to be very cold; but his sorrow, his gratitude, touched me in spite of myself, and the tears came into my eyes as I watched him out of sight.

Months passed, and we heard nothing from him. Lou busied herself over her pursuits, but she was drooping sadly. Her cheeks had lost their brilliant color, her dancing brown eyes looked very large and sad, and it was almost heartbreaking to hear her laugh, it was so unlike the old merry musical outburst that lent such cheer and brightness to the household. I imagined that a change of scene would do her good, and proposed spending the hot months at some fashionable watering-place. She languidly agreed to all my proposals. We went to Long Branch, and at first she brightened up wonderfully. The hotel where we took up our abode was filled with a gay crowd which was mostly young people. Every moment of the day and evening was devoted to pleasure. There were sailing parties on the sunshiny sea, rowing parties from dusk to moonlight, drives on the smooth hard beach and back on the tree-shaded country roads, moonlight flirtations on the piazza, and hops in the great saloon nearly every night. She was the reigning belle. I had never seen her look so handsome. Her cheeks burned with such a vivid crimson, and her eyes were so full of radiant light. She seemed really wild with spirits, too—managed the crowd of admirers in her train with infinite tact, and exercised her exquisite taste in the getting up of striking and artistic toilets. But in the midst of it all a change suddenly came o'er the spirit of her dreams, and she begged me to go home with her at once, saying she was tired to death. After that her health seemed to fail. Dr. Willoughby said that it was only debility, and prescribed tonics and a great deal of fresh air; but nothing seemed to do her any good. She looked like the ghost of her old self; still, there was nothing the

matter, she said; she had no pain, she was only tired.

At the end of two years we were fairly compelled to give up our old homestead. We were in the midst of markets and wholesale stores. The street was a perfect Babel, our taxes were enormous; then the city wished to build a new post-office where the old house stood, and offered us a price for the estate which fairly bewildered us. We were quite rich, and as we could well afford it, Dr. Willoughby advised a trip to Europe; it might do Lou good, he said. She really brightened up at the prospect of going, and as for me, if it had not been for my sister's condition, I should have been perfectly wild with delight. I had dreamed of that old world so long, of its relics of the past, its treasures of art, and the romance of antiquity which lingered round its shores. We sailed in December, and after spending a month or so in London, went over to Paris. We had friends in London, and intended to spend the winter there, but Lou suddenly took it into her head that she must go to Paris.

"I am so afraid that I shall see *him*, Helen," she said, "and I could not bear *that* now."

I knew that she meant John Gilbert, and thought it would be as well that she should not meet him. She was improving wonderfully, however, and beginning to seem quite like her old self. When we reached Paris she was even gay, and delighted in everything that she saw. The brilliant streets with their perpetual holiday air, the clatter of the musical foreign tongue, the quaint little shops with their polite and dressy keepers, the old historical buildings, the gardens and the art galleries.

"Helen," she said to me one day, "I believe that I am going to die, for I feel as if all my sorrows were over."

"I was hoping that a change of scene would do as much for you," I replied. "You were morbid, dear, and this was just what you needed. I am not afraid that you will die now."

It was a blustering March day, for all the world like the one of two years ago, when John Gilbert was brought to our house all unconscious of what fate had in store for him there. Lou and I were walking in the Tuilleries. The tree-boughs bent and creaked; dry leaves blew in clouds; the sky overhead was of the deepest blue flecked with white clouds. Carriages full of richly-

dressed people rolled gayly along, picturesque little beggars held out their grimy palms for a penny. Lou always wore any quantity of floating things, veils, scarfs, sashes, ribbons, and the like. Floating things became her, and she always disposed them so carelessly that I regarded her with apprehension whenever anything stronger than a summer zephyr placed its finger on these graceful additions to her toilet.

"Lou, you will surely lose your scarf," I said, touching the gauzy affair that was just folded, not tied, round her throat. And just then a fresh gust came round the corner, seized it and whirled it away.

"Well, let it go," she said. "I am not going to run after it." And we walked deliberately on.

A gentleman who was just turning down another walk, however, saw it when it blew, and came hurrying up behind us, all out of breath, to restore it to its owner. Lou turned round to thank him, but after uttering a little cry of surprised delight, stood as if spellbound. I turned myself to investigate matters; and found Mr. Gilbert holding both her hands, and looking as if his whole soul were shining out of his eyes.

"I was going to take the steamer for America this very night. I could not stay away any longer," he said. "And I should have missed you, after all. I think some special providence was in the wind that drifted that scarf away."

"You seem to have some strange connec-

tion with the March winds, Mr. Gilbert," said I. "They always drift you toward us, at least."

"True," he replied; "I believe that my good genius lurks in their breath, though they were rather rude to my poor head once."

Lou had withdrawn her hands from his clasp, and stood looking very pale, and somewhat cold, and surprised. I looked at her, and recovered my senses.

"It is time that we should return to the hotel," I said. "My sister has been ill, and is still something of an invalid. I am very glad to have met you, Mr. Gilbert." (This was a fib.) "I hope your wife is well."

"My wife!" he exclaimed. "Did you not receive the paper I sent you containing news of her death nearly a year ago? And are you going to dismiss me in this way? I thought you would both meet me as an old friend, at least." And he regarded Lou with very sad reproachful eyes.

But there is no need for me to relate the remainder of the conversation; you know, of course, that Lou married him, and they lived happily ever afterwards, like a king and queen in the old fairy stories. And now, though years have passed since then, whenever the March winds blow in a particularly blustering manner, Lou listens to them as if there were some magic in their voices, and says she is always looking for some good gift to drift to her feet from their whirling wings.

MISADVENTURES OF A LIEUTENANT.

BY HENRI MONTCALM.

On board the afternoon express, almost alone by himself in the palace car, a young man in a military cap, and with an unmistakably military air, was doing his best to accomplish what, as a matter of fact, was impossible; viz., to keep himself from going to sleep. He was aware that at Steepbrook, twenty miles farther on, he was to change to another train, which would take him to Boston. A nice joke it would be if he should fall asleep, and get carried beyond the junction, — especially nice, considering the fact that he had just five cents, and no more, in his pocket.

Twenty miles farther on: well, that would take something less than half an hour. He certainly could keep awake that long.

How foolish he had been not to borrow some money of Edwards, when he left him in New York. Dear old Edwards! But for him, he might have got something worse than a broken arm in that last tussle with the Sioux.

And, thinking of this, as he gazed dreamily out of the window, presently — quite determined all the while to keep awake — the lieutenant was back in good earnest in his old life on the plains, marching and countermarching once more, fighting and bleeding and often well-nigh dying for his country, till at length he found himself the sole survivor of a little band, that, penned in and surrounded beyond hope of escape, had sold their lives as dearly as soldiers' lives were ever sold. He thought now that he was lying on the ground beside his dead steed, pretending death in the hope of escaping mutilation, when suddenly a terrible savage came along, and, bending over him, with weapon upraised, shouted distinctly in his ear, —

"Steepbrook! Steepbrook!"

The young man awoke with a start. Yes: there was the brakeman, holding the door open, and with the name still on his lips. He leaped up, seized his bag and overcoat,

and hurried from the car, still only half awake. Then the train started on again, and left him standing there on the platform in the rain. It was a small, country station, with no signs of a junction anywhere about.

He went into the waiting-room, and inquired of the man there when the other train would be along.

"What other train?" was the gruff response.

"Why, the train for Boston. Is n't this Steepbrook Junction?"

"No, sir: it's Deepbrook. Steepbrook's fifteen miles up the road."

"Then I've got off at the wrong place."

"Then you have."

"When does the next train go through?"

"Seven-twenty tomorrow morning."

The young man all at once looked more provoked and bewildered than ever. No train until morning, and here he was, dropped down in this barren spot, in the midst of a rain-storm, and only five cents in his pocket! He had known difficulty and danger before now; but this was the most appalling situation he had ever encountered.

He looked around as though he expected an angel of deliverance to appear: then he rubbed his eyes again. Whether he expected one or not, there she was, — a young lady, with black eyes, and saucy red lips, enveloped from head to foot in a blue waterproof.

"I beg your pardon, sir: is this Lieutenant Smith?"

He bowed, being unable to answer in words. Who the deuce was this that knew his name way out here in this wilderness?

"Will you come out at once?" she continued, turning toward the door, and preparing to raise an umbrella. "The carriage is here. You'll excuse us for being a little late. We only got Fred's telegram fifteen minutes ago."

Lieutenant Smith followed her mechanically. He had made up his mind now that he had not yet awakened from his dream. There was a carriage outside, with a small boy, and a coachman in livery, on the front seat.

"You had best take the back seat," his conductor directed.

Still without a word, he obeyed. Then the driver took up the reins, and they drove off rapidly.

The lieutenant sat like one conscious, yet

unseeing. He did not attempt to account for anything, — the whole thing was too unaccountable. He did not marvel much even when the young lady presently remarked, —

"Your arm has gotten along finely, Mr. Smith. I thought from what Fred said that you still wore it in a sling."

Who the deuce was Fred? and how did he know about the broken arm? Was he really in a dream still? or had he been mistaken for somebody else? If the latter was true, it was all very strange indeed; and he could regard it as nothing less than a special providence arranged for his miraculous deliverance from rain and starvation. It was not for him, a mere lieutenant of infantry, to interfere with the wise designs of Omniscience. If there was any mistake, he made up his mind that he would not immediately correct it. Nay: was it not his duty to lend himself to the fraud? He would carry it out, if possible, for a few hours, at least; then he would take French leave, and sneak off in the early train. He must have supper, and a night's lodging, somewhere.

So he finally mustered courage to look at his companion. The hood of the waterproof was thrown back now, revealing a bright, piquant face under a becoming turban hat. She was not looking at him. He had hardly spoken a word since they met; and she was a good deal puzzled, and not a little disgusted. Was this the friend Fred had gone into ecstasies over? and who had been such a lion at the West-Point balls last season? She took heart, however, when he at last began to talk a little, although his conversation amounted to nothing more than a question now and then in reference to some passing object. When, presently, she asked him something about Fred, he froze up again, and replied in the blindest kind of way.

The young lady's tongue was loosened, however; and, since the lieutenant would not talk, she kept up a lively conversation with the boy on the front seat, — evidently her brother. From what was said, Lieutenant Smith concluded that these two were children of a wealthy mill-owner named Mortimer, whom he himself knew by reputation; that Fred was an older brother; that he himself was a recent graduate of West Point, and a particular friend of Fred's; and that Fred had telegraphed them to meet Mr. Smith (i. e., himself) at the afternoon

train; and that he himself (*i. e.*, Fred) could not come down until the next day.

"Probably," the lieutenant thought, "I shall not have the pleasure of meeting my friend Frederic,—since I shall strike tents early in the morning for a forced march."

Presently they stopped at the head of a lane, and Bertie got out.

"I am going down to the works, Elsie," said he. "I'll come up to tea when father does."

Then they drove on again, and shortly entered a carriage-drive, through some elegant grounds, halting in a moment or two before a fine country-house. Lieutenant Smith got out, and assisted his companion to the ground. He began to feel very much like an ordinary impostor, and did not know what to do or say.

"I must ask you to overlook my apparent stupidity, Miss Mortimer," he finally managed to blunder out, as he followed her into the hall. "I was up nearly all last night, and I am really quite ill today."

Her sympathy was up and in her eyes at once.

"Well, I thought something was the matter," she answered, with refreshing frankness. "I am sorry you don't feel well. You will want to go to your room at once, won't you? And shall I send you up some tea? or is there anything else I can do for you? Will you care to come down to supper?"

And the lieutenant, seeing here a temporary relief from his embarrassing position, said that he would like to go up-stairs at once; and if she would kindly send him up a bit of toast, he would not inflict his stupid presence upon anybody again that day. He hoped to be in better trim in the morning.

So a servant was called to conduct him up-stairs; and then, after a very delicious little repast, which Miss Mortimer (Heaven bless her!) had no doubt prepared with her own hands, he flung himself on the bed, and fell asleep.

The bedroom was a front one, and the windows were open. Our hero was awakened once, a long while after, by a man's voice outside, and then he heard Miss Mortimer say,—

"Why, father! how late you are; and where is Bertie?"

And Mr. Mortimer's reply,—

"I have n't seen him for some time. I

thought he was home: he was down at the works with Harvey's boys at five o'clock. He'll come along when he gets ready, I reckon."

Then the young soldier fell asleep once more.

It must have been an hour or more after this that he found himself suddenly wide awake again, with the impression that there was something unusual going on. It was quite dark in the room now. There were hurried footsteps outside his door, and confused, anxious voices below.

He went to the door, and asked what was the matter. A servant answered, with quivering voice,—

"The works is all afire; and Master Bertie can't be founded nowhars!"

He put on his coat, and went down-stairs. A carriage had just driven off, and there was no one there except two frightened servants. Over the trees he could see a glare and smoke, and he hurried off down the path.

Down at the Mortimer Works an excited crowd of men and women were standing about, looking up at the dark windows of the large mill. The doors had been opened below, and an attempt made to reach the uppermost story, where the fire was; but no one could get above the third floor. The smoke drove them back.

Meanwhile, away up under the roof the flames were now showing themselves; and then, at the window of the corner room,—though at that time no one stopped to wonder how he came to be there,—Master Bertie suddenly appeared at the window, and held his head far out; while the smoke, though as yet in no great volume, was all about him.

The room had been used as a sort of lumber-room, and was generally kept fastened. The boy had been hiding there from his playfellows just before the works closed, and had fallen asleep. There was but one room between him and the fire, and this room was now so full of smoke that it would have been certain death by suffocation to enter it. There was no way of escape but by the windows.

Within a dozen feet of the window where Bertie had made his appearance, a stationary ladder ran up the side of the building, connecting with one of the windows of this adjoining room; but the boy could not possibly reach this ladder, and there were no

movable ladders of suitable length anywhere around. Great Heaven! what was to be done? He could not remain where he was long: the fire was already at the door of his room!

Presently a carriage drove up, and Mr. Mortimer and Elsie got out. The great man seemed to take in the whole situation at a glance. The crowd made way for him, and he came through it, with his daughter, pale and beautiful, *by his side*. They stopped close under the burning walls.

"Is there no way to get the boy down?" Mr. Mortimer cried hoarsely. "Great God! why have n't some of you been up the ladder? Here, — stand aside!"

And he would have gone up himself; but a nimbler and younger man was before him. Yet what use could there be in that? The man reached the window of the room next the lumber-room, and broke in the sash; but the smoke came rushing out, and nearly overpowered him. There he was, within a few feet of the child, and yet powerless to reach or help him. He came slowly down the ladder again, and the poor father groaned aloud. He looked up, and called out to the boy; but Bertie did not hear him.

The smoke was all about him now, and it was plain that he would soon be smothered where he was if he did not jump. The old man turned to the crowd about him.

"You all know me," he said: "I do as I say, do I not? I will give you, any of you, everything, — yes, all I have, — if you will bring me down my boy."

But they looked at him, and said not a word. They loved him, in their way, and pitied him now, — pitied him as they had never pitied themselves in their hardest trials, — but they could not do what was impossible. Only God could give back the boy.

Suddenly the crowd parted again to let a new-comer pass through.

He was a young man in a military cap, and he walked swiftly and straight. He saw it all at a glance too, — saw the boy get out of the window silently, at last, and hang by his two weak arms. There was fire as well as smoke behind him now.

Elsie Mortimer recognized the young man at once; and something in his stern, resolute look gave her hope.

"O Mr. Smith! can't you do something for him?" she asked eagerly and beseechingly.

He looked down into her face, — a face which, even at that moment, he declared to himself to be wonderfully beautiful. Do anything? ay! everything for her.

He made her no answer whatever, but called out for a light, strong rope. Somehow, — as if even inanimate things came at his determined call, — it was in his hands at once, pliable and soft and strong; just what he wanted for his purpose. He gave it a dexterous twist, and formed the end into a loop like a lasso. His life on the plains — half military, half Indian — had well fitted him for an occasion like this. Then he coiled the rope over his left arm, and went rapidly up the ladder.

There was a great hush now upon the crowd below. Every eye was fixed on the brave young fellow who was far up the ladder, — every heart was beating for him.

He was at the upper story at last, pausing just below the window where the flames and smoke were bursting angrily forth. They saw that he was saying something to the child, and then they beheld Bertie suddenly change his position. There was a great cry went up from them. They had thought for an instant that he was falling.

The young stranger seized firmly hold of the ladder with his left arm, and swung himself far out, with the rope in his other hand. Then suddenly, with a swift, skillful motion, he flung it. It spun through the air, and, true to its aim, settled over Bert's shoulders. Then, one after another, the brave little fellow put his arms through it, it was drawn tightly about his body, and all in an instant he was seen to drop almost straight down for a little way, then in a curving line through nearly a dozen feet of air, and then, — then he was swinging close to the ladder by the rope and by the arm of the young soldier. Before this, men had gone up the ladder to render what assistance they might; and with the help of these the two were now coming down again. Presently the boy was in his father's arms.

As for the hero of the occasion, he had obstinately refused all assistance in coming down the ladder; and no sooner did he reach the bottom than he sank down on the ground, and fainted dead away.

Poor fellow! his left arm, hardly sound again after its fracture, two months before, had not been able to sustain the terrible strain: it was broken again in the old place.

And so I am obliged to end this story

here, where, by good rights, perhaps, it ought to begin. Lieutenant Smith did not steal off before breakfast the next morning. At that time, indeed, he did not know whether he was Lieutenant Smith, or somebody else. He was in a raging fever; and Miss Elsie Mortimer, sitting beside him, heard him, again and again, in his delirium, implore her forgiveness for some great wrong he seemed to fancy he had done her. She did not exactly understand what this wrong was, until, at ten o'clock, Fred came, and with him the other Lieutenant Smith,

a gay, handsome young fellow, whom her brother had brought down with the special intention of having he and Elsie fall in love with each other. Alas! he came just one day too late. Elsie had fallen in love with another man; and she never got over it. Of course she forgave Lieutenant Smith number one his base imposture when it came to be honestly explained; and of course, when he asked her, a month later, to marry him, she consented out and out. Indeed, all this is so much a matter of course, that I forbear to say anything more about it.

MISS CARLETON'S SHIP.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

"PLEASE, Miss Carleton, your ship has come in!"

The speaker was a bright little fellow, perhaps eight years old, and he made the announcement with a wonderfully eager and important air, as he entered the schoolroom where his teacher and fellow-pupils were assembled, one lovely summer morning. It was not yet quite nine o'clock, and the children had been gathered in little groups chattering away like magpies, but at Charlie Gray's speech they stood for a moment in silence, then all burst forth with a torrent of exclamations.

"O Miss Carleton! Isn't that good! Now you'll get the new maps you promised us," cried one.

"Yes, and the flower seeds for the garden," added another.

"And my new knife!" chimed in a third.

"And string for our kites!" chorussed several.

"And I hope, Miss Carleton, you won't forget the curtains, so the sun need not make your head ache so badly," said gentle Annie Evans, one of the oldest scholars.

Miss Carleton heard this last remark even amidst the general hubbub, and her bewilderment at its cause.

"Thank you, Annie," she said, gratefully; "but let us first find out what all this is about. What makes you think my ship has come in, Charlie?" she asked, drawing the little fellow towards her.

"'Cause I saw it," was the proud reply.

"You saw it! But where? and how did you know it was mine?"

"'Cause your name is on it in big gold letters. I was coming along the beach, and I saw her lying right off there," pointing towards the coast. "She is a real beauty, too," said the boy, with the nautical enthusiasm inherited from a long line of seafaring ancestors. "She is all black and gold, and her sails are as white! Guess they're new, ain't they?" he inquired, excitedly.

"I really don't know," laughed Miss Carleton; "but you are sure it was my name, Charlie? Can you remember how to spell it?"

"Yes ma'am!" responded Charlie, em-

phatically; "just like this." And picking up a bit of chalk, he laboriously inscribed on the blackboard, "G-r-a-c-e C-a-r-l-e-t-o-n."

"There!" he exclaimed, in triumph, "ain't that your name? I knew 'twas, 'cause it's on your book that you let me carry home for you sometimes, and I remembered it just as soon as I saw it on the ship."

Miss Carleton looked both puzzled and amused; but just then the little wheezy old clock fastened to the wall began to strike nine. With a slight sigh, she rang the little bell on her desk, the children subsided into their seats, and the business of the day began.

Only Annie Evans noted the restless far-away look in the face that had grown so dear to her, or the expression of pain that crossed it when at the noon intermission, as she tried to soothe a little one whose doll had come to grief, she unconsciously began her usual phrase, "When my ship," and Charlie, with wide open eyes, interrupted, "Why, Miss Carleton, it *has* come!"

The teacher and most of the scholars lived too far from the schoolhouse to go home at noon, consequently it was not until four o'clock that Grace Carleton found herself free. Locking the door of the schoolhouse, she turned her steps towards the beach.

Fortunately, Charlie's mother had given him an errand in the opposite direction, for she did not feel inclined just now to listen to his ceaseless talk. His announcement, made in all good faith, had roused a host of sad memories, and she longed to be alone, and think them all down.

Clear before her rose the time, not yet three years past, when she had been the petted darling of wealthy parents. Then came the memory of those sad days, when her father's sudden death had been followed by the unexpected news that all their fortune was gone. Probably her father had foreseen the impending ruin, and his anxiety had killed him. She and her mother had, with the pittance remaining, come to this little seaport town, as Mrs. Carleton's health, always delicate, had been seriously impaired by her grief, and the family physician had ordered change of scene.

"Change of scene!" repeated Grace to herself, bitterly, as she recalled this. "When he knew full well that we must change—give up our dear home, and all that mamma had been accustomed to. That we had scarcely money enough left to bring us here, and yet how coolly and easily he talked, and pocketed his fee as if poor papa were alive, and we had plenty of means. And Gerald, too! Never to come near us!"

That was the bitterest thought of all. Gerald was the doctor's son, and had been Grace's most devoted cavalier until her sad reverses; after which she had never seen him at all, and his father only at the above-mentioned interview.

It could hardly have been said that Grace was in love with Gerald Haughton, but he was handsome and devoted—she had enjoyed his society, and very probably might soon have been engaged to him, had her prosperity continued.

The prescribed change of scene had not benefited Mrs. Carleton, and but a few weeks elapsed ere Grace found herself a penniless orphan, with no one to turn to for support or guidance.

"Don't grieve so, you poor child!" said good motherly Mrs. Gray, with whom they had been boarding. "Try to remember that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, and believe that in some way all our trials are for our good, though we can't understand how."

But the girl drew away shuddering. "O, don't, Mrs. Gray! Don't say that it is good for me to lose my dear parents! You don't know what it is to be left all alone!"

"But I know what is perhaps worse," answered Mrs. Gray, so quietly that Grace's sobs were checked, and she glanced up, wonderingly, to say:

"Worse! what could be worse?"

"Was it not worse to see the fishing-smack, with my husband and my brave lad, go down before my eyes, and the storm raging so that no one could help them? I was left, Miss Grace, with my little Charlie in my arms—he was but a baby then—and not a cent to take care of him or myself!"

"And yet you can say it was for your good?" asked her listener, almost reproachfully.

"I know that 'He does not willingly afflict,'" answered Mrs. Gray, reverently. "I cannot doubt that my husband and boy are better off; and has it not taught me

how much goodness and kindness there is in the world? Didn't my neighbors club together to pay what was owing on this house? and didn't the owner refuse to take the money, and send me a deed of the place? And every summer, when the city folks come down here, don't the neighbors pretend they can't take boarders, and send them to me, till my house is crowded? And did one of them ever forget to send me the finest of their fish when they came in, or the earliest of vegetables, or a can of milk? Ah yes, Miss Grace! there's a deal of goodness in people, if you only find it out," concluded the good woman, as she wiped her eyes with the corner of her neat gingham apron.

One sentence in the little history cut Grace to the quick. She had always a brave honest spirit, and she showed it now.

"That is one thing that troubles me, Mrs. Gray," she said. "The neighbors recommended us to come to you. We meant to stay only two weeks, until mamma could gain strength, and then we were going to look for work. But you know how ill she grew, and could not be moved, and then the expenses of the—" Grace's voice trembled sadly—"funeral; and now I have nothing left, and you will lose by me, and—and what shall I do?" sobbed the poor girl.

"There, there, child, don't cry and take on so," cried the widow, affectionately stroking the bowed head. "Lie down here on the lounge and rest a bit. See how comfortable you will be when I put a pillow under your head, and throw this shawl over you; and now listen while I tell you something.

"As for your owing me, that's all nonsense. What signified a week or two more or less, and neither of you eating enough to keep a bird alive? It was so late in the season that the rooms would have been empty, so it was all the better that you had them, and you need never think of that again.

"But now, just see how things are ordered for us! Why, this morning the milkman was telling me how the school committee have been disappointed about the teacher they had engaged. It seems she is going to be married, and has written to say they must find another teacher, and they're in a peck of trouble, for school was to begin in another week. Now if you say the word, I will just step over and tell some of the

committees that you would like the place, and then you'll be all provided for."

"A school!" exclaimed Grace, sitting up in alarm. "Why, I don't know enough to teach! I am afraid I have forgotten all my algebra and geometry, and—"

Mrs. Gray laughed softly. "Bless the dear child's heart! She thinks we are the same as city folks. Why, Miss Grace, most of them won't know their letters, and those that do only want to learn enough arithmetic to count what little money they make; and enough geography to know whether they live here, or 'tother side of the world. They will pay you so much a month, and you can board round, or—"

"O, I couldn't possibly do that," cried Grace, shrinking from the idea of living in some of the houses she had seen in the little hamlet. "Couldn't I earn enough so that I could pay you for my board?—that is," she hesitated, "if you would wish to have me stay!"

"Of course I wish it, with all my heart!" answered Mrs. Gray, earnestly, and evidently complimented by Grace's wish to remain under her roof. "Now just lie still, and I'll step over to some of the neighbors and talk to them about it."

Grace sank back; too much worn in mind and body to offer any opposition, and thankful for the possibility that there was a chance for her to support herself.

Mrs. Gray returned radiant. She had seen the leading members of the school committee, who had been much pleased by her suggestion, and promised to call that evening with their official brethren, and "examine" Miss Carleton for the situation.

"Examine me?" inquired Grace. "What does that mean?"

"Now don't you be a bit worried," answered Mrs. Gray, soothingly. "It means asking questions, to find out if you know enough; but bless your heart, they don't know half as much themselves; and if you told them the moon was made of green cheese they'd all believe it. Don't you trouble about that, but just take my word for it that you'll do first rate, and who knows! This school may last you till your ship comes in!"

Grace had never heard this expression, and perceiving her bewildered look, Mrs. Gray added, "That's what we always say here when we mean that better luck may come sometime;—perhaps it's a kind of a seafaring saying."

Mrs. Gray's prophecy was fulfilled. Grace charmed the entire committee by her sweet simple manners, and what they deemed her profound learning. A week later saw her formally installed as mistress of the village schoolroom, where she had ever since reigned, enthroned in the hearts of her little subjects.

Gradually light and happiness, or at least cheerfulness, had stolen back to her. Mrs. Gray's motherly care had smoothed many little troubles from her path, while her plain practical good sense and true simple faith had taught the young girl many a useful lesson.

She had rather adopted the phrase, which had at first hearing sounded so oddly to her, and often used it, as it is evident from the beginning of our story her scholars had noticed.

"When my ship comes in we will have new maps," she had said one day, while endeavoring to explain the changes that had taken place since those somewhat ancient charts were printed. "When my ship comes in we will have a new ball of string," as she patiently disentangled the old and much knotted twine attached to her scholars' kites; and "Miss Carleton's ship" was firmly believed in by many a childish heart.

But while we have been thus reading some of Grace's thoughts, she has advanced far enough along the beach to come within sight of the vessel that had so aroused Charlie's admiration in the morning. There she lay at anchor, as graceful as a swan, and glistening in the afternoon sun was her golden name—"Grace Carleton."

"It is strange!" said Grace to herself. "To be sure my name is not very uncommon, but still it seems strange to me to see it there. However, I do not see that it affects me one way or another, except that it has raised hopes in my little scholars that I cannot fulfil." And she pursued her homeward walk, pondering upon the possibility of making the children comprehend that the vessel had not brought their expected prizes, and wondering if her little savings would enable her to purchase the articles she had thoughtlessly promised.

"I must break myself of the foolish habit of saying that so frequently," she thought, as she opened the gate of Mrs. Gray's garden. That good woman sat on the piazza, conversing with a young man, a stranger, of perhaps twenty-five or thirty years.

"Ah, here comes Miss Carleton now!" she heard Mrs. Gray exclaim; and she advanced with the uncomfortable feeling that she had been the subject of their conversation.

"Well now, dear child, I'm real glad you're home. Seems to me you look tired. This is Captain Kendricks, who is going to stay here a day or two, while his vessel is getting fixed up. I told him we would try to make him comfortable and contented, so you just sit down and talk a bit while I get tea ready. I was just saying how odd it was that his vessel has the same name that you have." And the worthy woman bustled into the house, leaving Captain Kendricks bowing, and Grace somewhat embarrassed by this strange introduction.

She soon recovered her self-possession, however, and said with a smile, "Since Mrs. Gray has promised that I will assist in making you comfortable, allow me to suggest that you will be more so if you are seated," ensconcing herself as she spoke in the chair which Mrs. Gray had just vacated.

The gentleman again bowed, and resumed his seat, and with a few easy remarks on the kindness of their hostess, led the conversation skillfully to topics in which his fair companion might probably be interested.

Grace wondered, even while she took her part. She had not met an equal in education and manners since the death of her parents, and it was an intellectual treat to talk to this stranger, who had evidently seen and read much.

She longed to ask why his vessel bore her name, but simple as the question seemed, she felt an unaccountable hesitation in asking it.

Others did not share in this feeling, however, for scarcely were they seated at the tea-table when little Charlie inquired:

"Captain Kendricks, what made you name your ship for Miss Carleton?"

Grace colored. Mrs. Gray said, "Hush, Charlie! you should not ask questions." But Captain Kendricks said, good-humoredly, "I hardly know, Charlie, whether my ship is named for Miss Carleton; but I hope she will permit me to ask a few questions in order to settle the point."

Grace bowed gravely, and Captain Kendricks continued, rather eagerly:

"Am I right in supposing that your fa-

ther was the late Granville Carleton of New York?"

Grace again bent her head in assent. Her eyes asked the explanation that her lips could not, and Captain Kendricks replied to the look:

"My father, Charles Kendricks, was an old college friend of Mr. Carleton, and their friendship continued through life."

"I have often heard my father speak of Mr. Kendricks," interrupted Grace.

"You know, then, that my father, soon after leaving college, married and settled in England, and has never revisited this country. He, however, always kept up a correspondence with Mr. Carleton, and they were constantly together during your father's business visits to England. Since hearing of his old friend's death, my father has been unable to learn anything of you or your mother, and it was not until Mrs. Gray informed me that I knew of your double bereavement. Mr. Carleton talked so fondly of his wife and daughter, that we grew to feel well acquainted with you, and when my father built the ship of which I have the command, he christened her 'Grace Carleton.'"

"So, after all, Charlie," he continued, "you are right, you see, and the vessel was named for Miss Carleton. I am most thankful," turning to Grace, "for the accident which compelled me to stop here, for I have searched vainly in New York for some tidings of you and your mother. It was my father's most especial charge to me."

Mrs. Gray's countenance was a sight to behold, and after seeing her two boarders seated on the piazza again, she went about her household tasks in a state of unalloyed delight.

"I always knew her ship would come in safe and sound," she soliloquized, "and now it has, sure enough; and I don't need spectacles to see that it will sail away with her pretty soon. Well, I shall miss her sadly, but I'm real glad, too!"

Mrs. Gray would have been still more convinced of the clearness of her vision had she known what Captain Kendricks wisely suppressed; that his father and Mr. Carleton had long ago made an agreement that when their children arrived at marriageable age they would bring about a meeting between them, which they fondly hoped might end in a mutual attachment. This

plan they had prudently forbore, to mention to the parties concerned; but after Mr. Carleton's death, Mr. Kendricks being unable to learn the fate of the widow and daughter of his friend, had confided the agreement to his son, and begged him to seek the missing ones.

"I don't ask anything more," the father had said. "Just see the girl and her mother, and at least let me know that they are not in destitution, as I very much fear they may be, from the accounts I hear of Mr. Carleton's business affairs."

It was a whim of the old gentleman to name the vessel which he placed at his son's disposal, Grace Carleton. "Who knows!" he said. "It may lead to your finding her. I feel as if it would bring success to your search in some way." And, as we have seen, it did.

But all this Captain Kendricks did not tell Grace, till after inventing every possible pretext for delaying his departure, he finally told her another tale; and on her replying that she could not consent without knowing whether his parents would approve, he thereupon confided to her the real object of his visit to America.

"I knew how it would be, my darling child," sobbed Mrs. Gray, "and I'm glad and thankful; only I can't help thinking for a minute how lonely I shall be without

you. But we must not waste any time in crying," she added, presently, "for the captain will be back in two weeks, and you won't be ready."

Grace smiled, as she thought that her few preparations would need but little time. Captain Kendricks had business in Boston, and had gone there for two weeks, when he was to return and carry Grace away; but first he must needs give a grand party on board his ship, to which all who had ever even spoken a kind word to Grace were bidden; and as she was a universal favorite, this included almost every one in the little village. A very grand affair it was, and every one was delighted, especially the school children, who, to their astonishment, found everything that their teacher had ever promised ready for them in that wonderful ship.

Mrs. Gray's heart was gladdened by many a gift from that same mysterious vessel, so that, as she gratefully declared, she had enough to make her rich all her life, if she lived to the age of Methuselah. And finally, one lovely morning there was a very quiet wedding in the village church; a procession of old and young to the wharf to see the last of the fair bride, and a still more firmly-rooted conviction in the minds of the juveniles of the reality of "Miss Carleton's Ship."

MISS SMITH'S BOARDING-HOUSE.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

"Changing your quarters again, Jack?" asked Ned Gleason as he entered his friend's room, and found him engaged in packing his trunk, if stuffing clean shirts, bootjacks, kid gloves, and blacking bottles and brushes into a trunk can properly be called packing it.

"Yes," answered Jack Smith, as he gave a fierce puff at his meerschaum, and a corresponding tug at a refractory drawer. "I can't stand this any longer; so I must even try again, though Heaven knows I am sick and tired of trying. Every boarding-house is worse than the one before it, — noisier, dirtier, more disgusting in every way."

"Where are you going now?" asked Ned as he lazily helped himself to a cigar from the box on the table, and drew the easiest chair in the room nearer the open window.

"I have n't decided. My week is up here, and my holidays begin tomorrow; so I am just going to send my trunk round to the store to await my return, and when I come back I must hunt up another place, and try to get along somehow, I suppose."

And his tone was so doleful that Ned burst into a laugh.

"I tell you, Ned, it's nothing to laugh at," began Jack, rather nettled by his friend's lack of sympathy.

"I know it is n't," replied Ned penitently, though his eyes still twinkled. "Bless you! don't I have the same thing to stand myself? Why, my last landlady used to rummage my desk all over, and help herself to my pocket-handkerchiefs. I laughed only at your mournful tones. But I have a plan. Why won't you come and board with me? It would be jolly."

"And have my desk rummaged, and my handkerchiefs borrowed?" said Jack. "No, thank you."

"Oh, that's where I was last week," explained Ned.

"And where are you this week?" asked Jack, as he stooped to pull a valise from under the bed, and began to pitch into it such articles as he wished to take with him on his trip.

"As you may see, I am at the present

moment reclining in this easy-chair; but all my belongings are at my sister's house."

"Lucky dog! are you going to board with your sister?" demanded Jack, looking up with envious eyes.

"No. I wish I could; but she lives too far from town. I have promised to join her party to the mountains; and as I had decided, like yourself, to leave my boarding-place, I sent my trunk to her house for safe keeping during my absence."

"Well, have you decided where to go when you return, that you invite me to go with you?" inquired Jack.

"I have been looking at a place on Blank Street," replied Jack; "Number 20, I believe."

"That's an enormous distance out," objected Jack.

"I know it; but the cars pass the door, and it seemed to me the air felt fresher and less stifling than right in the city. That is a recommendation during the warm weather, and no doubt we shall change a dozen times before winter."

"Pleasant prospect," groaned Jack dismally.

"The landlady seemed rather decent," continued Ned. "By the way, her name is Smith: perhaps, now, she is a relative of yours."

"Perhaps she is n't," muttered Jack.

"Well, at any rate, you are both doubtless descended from the illustrious John of Puritan fame," continued his friend mischievously; "so that would make you distant relatives."

"Very distant, I should say, especially as it is probable that the female in question was not named Smith previous to her marriage."

"Oh! she is n't married. She's a regular old maid."

"An old maid! And you expect me to go there to board! Why, man alive! it would beat all my past experience. She would be poking into my trunk and desk, and pouring forth her sorrows as a poor lone woman. Who knows but she might expect one of us to marry her?"

"Well, just as you like, of course," replied his friend as he rose to go. "Only I think the place looks clean and quiet; and I should be glad of your company, old fellow."

"Thank you," returned Jack, as they shook hands. "I don't believe I shall ever

stay long in any one place; so perhaps you would only get me there to find me moving away again."

"I'll tell you what it is, Jack," exclaimed Ned, as if inspired by a sudden thought, "you ought to marry."

"Perhaps I ought," returned Jack, shrugging his shoulders; "but why, more than yourself?"

"Because you are always harping on home and home comforts, and have a natural inclination for a quiet, humdrum existence; while I contrive to get on very decently despite the tortures of boarding-house keepers."

With mutual wishes for each others' health and happiness during their holidays, the friends then parted, Jack returning to his packing, and Ned to his sister's pleasant home.

Next morning both left the city, — Ned for the mountains, and Jack for a yachting excursion, — and three weeks passed without their hearing of each other.

It was a sultry August morning that beheld Jack once more entering the large wholesale establishment of which he was the head book-keeper. Several letters awaited him, on his desk. One was from Ned Gleason. It ran as follows: —

"DEAR JACK, — If a fortnight's absence has made you want to see me half as much as I long once more to behold you, perhaps you will revoke your decision, and consent to share my new quarters, where I really think we shall be quite comfortable.

"Come up and stay with me tonight, at any rate. Dinner at seven.

"Yours,

NED."

"I might as well go tonight," mused Jack, as he prepared for his day's work. "I shall be glad to see Ned, and it's hot to be hunting about for a place. If I don't like his, I can try somewhere else tomorrow."

Half-past six accordingly saw Jack on a horse-car, bound for Blank Street.

"I did n't notice what number Ned mentioned," he thought, as he rode along; "but I believe I have his note."

Feeling in his pocket, he soon discovered the epistle; but it bore neither date nor number.

"This is agreeable," muttered Jack. "I

don't even know that he meant tonight. I am pretty sure he told me it was number 20, so I suppose I can go and inquire; but I do wish the fellow would ever learn business habits, and date a letter."

Here, however, was number 20; and Jack had no more time for comments.

He was astonished at the place in which he found himself. Number 20, unlike its more pretentious and cityfied neighbors, was a pretty cottage, with a wide veranda, and standing far enough back from the street to admit of a small but exceedingly tasteful garden in front.

"It does n't look a bit like a boarding-house," soliloquized Jack, as he opened the little gate, and, advancing up the gravel path, rang the bell.

"And you do not look a bit like a boarding-house keeper," he mentally added, as the door was opened by a young lady whose bright, happy face looked as unlike her cityfied neighbors' as her house did.

Jack bowed and stammered at this unexpected apparition.

"Miss Smith?" he said interrogatively, not because he had intended to, but because he was wondering if that really were Miss Smith.

"Yes," was the frank answer; "and you, I suppose, are Mr. Smith?" with a little smile at the coincidence of names. "Walk in, please. We have been wondering what detained you. Tea is quite ready. Would you like to go to your room first?—Here, Katy," to a servant, "show Mr. Smith to his room, and, when he is ready, to the dining-room."

And, with a slight bow of dismissal, the fair apparition vanished into an apartment at the end of the hall, where Jack caught a glimpse of a table apparently ready for some meal.

"I don't quite understand all this," he thought, as he followed the neat-looking servant up-stairs to a large, airy room, comfortably furnished, and cool even on that sultry evening. "As to her expecting me, I suppose Ned told her that I might come; but she never mentioned him, and spoke of my room. However, I suppose it's all right."

"What time does Mr. Gleason get here?" he asked, turning to Katy.

"I don't know, sir," she answered, with a perplexed look. "Is there anything you wish for, sir?"

"Nothing, thank you," answered Jack. "I'll be down to dinner in a few moments."

And Katy withdrew.

"It's lucky I brought my bag, as Ned is n't here to lend me a brush," thought Jack as he took a whisk broom from his bag, and carefully dusted his coat. "Seems to me the old fellow has grown very orderly of late. I never was in his room before without finding every chair covered with his books and clothes. Somehow this looks just as if a lady takes care of it. I have n't seen a room like this since mother died."

And the thoughts that traveled back to his boyish home, and vividly recalled the womanly touches that beautified each place, made his face overshadowed as he descended the stairs, and, guided by Katy, entered the dining-room, where he found only Miss Smith awaiting him.

"I am sorry my sister is too ill with a headache to receive you, Mr. Smith," she said pleasantly. "She is more accustomed to doing the honors than I am; so you must please excuse all blunders."

Jack bowed, and tried to get off some pretty speech; but it stuck in his throat. Usually he prided himself upon his neat way of doing such things; but, as he afterward confessed to himself, this was not the kind of young lady he usually met.

Then, to add to his discomfiture, he had noticed, just as his young hostess spoke, that the table was laid for only two. Where was Ned? Suspicions of something wrong began to force themselves upon him. But the present situation was too delightful to be voluntarily abandoned. He would enjoy what he could.

This proved to be a good deal. Taking the seat toward which Miss Smith had waved her hand, he had leisure to notice, as she busied herself with the cups and saucers, the home-like beauty of the apartment. Vines clustered about the open windows, through which there was a pleasant glimpse of the back garden containing trees and flowers. If the bedroom had reminded him of home, this room seemed like a half-forgotten dream. The snowy cloth, the delicate china and glass, and the old-fashioned silver urn half hiding the presiding deity from his view, all looked so home-like, so restful and refreshing, to the poor fellow, who had been driven from one boarding-place to another for so many years,

the fancied it must be all a dream, and that he should presently awaken, and find himself again in his old comfortless, forlorn state.

Then the supper! Was ever such a meal seen in a boarding-house? Hot, fragrant tea, with real cream; delicate slices of ham; snowy bread; home-made muffins, brought in ever and anon by the neat-handed Katy; and heaping baskets of fruit at each end of the table.

What wonder that Jack dreaded his awakening, as he thought, with additional loathing, of the soiled table-cloths, cracked dishes, and unpalatable fare of boarding-houses in general?

In the mean time, Miss Smith, having hospitably assisted him to a bountiful portion of the good things before them, and made a few remarks on the beauty of the evening, apparently thought it some fault of hers that her guest seemed so silent and *distrail*, and, with the prettiest little blush imaginable, essayed an explanation.

"Do you know, Mr. Smith," she began, "that I had formed quite an erroneous idea of you?"

"Had you?" said Jack, rousing himself from his abstraction, and secretly wondering why she had formed any ideas about him. "Not disagreeable, I hope?"

"Well, — no," she rejoined, meditating a little. "No, I don't know that it was disagreeable; only I thought you were much older, — quite an old gentleman, in fact.

"Indeed!" said Jack. "I assure you, Miss Smith, I will do my best to please you by growing older every day, if that will make any amends."

Miss Smith laughed, — a low, musical laugh, which Jack privately compared to a peal of silver bells, and was conscious of a sudden antipathy to the idea of Ned Gleason enjoying the music of that laugh.

"I am quite sure," continued the fair hostess, "that I understood sister when she said you wore glasses, and had such a benevolent, fatherly" —

Here she seemed to realize that she was talking to a young and handsome man, and, coloring furiously, inquired if he would not have another cup of tea.

"If you please," answered Jack so meekly, in his effort not to laugh, and add to her confusion, that she glanced up in surprise, and, their looks meeting, the ludicrousness

of the whole affair struck both, and they burst into a hearty laugh, which dissipated all further reserve, and they were soon chatting quite merrily on a variety of subjects.

"Shall we adjourn to the parlor?" asked Miss Smith at length, when dinner was over, "or do you prefer the veranda this warm evening?"

Jack chose the veranda, after ascertaining that his companion would join him there. She suggested that he should smoke, to drive away the mosquitos, and, excusing herself while she went to inquire about her sister's head, left him for a few minutes, but presently appeared, looking somewhat perplexed.

"Katy tells me, Mr. Smith," she began, "that you inquired when Mr. Gleason would be here."

"Yes," began Jack, wondering why that name caused both mistress and maid to look so puzzled. "Yes: I naturally expected" —

But here the garden-gate clicked; and a lad came up the walk, handed a note to Miss Smith, and retreated.

"Miss B. Smith," she read aloud, after glancing at the superscription. "Definite, when my sister's name is Beatrice, and mine is Blanche. Fortunately, however, we have no secrets from each other, and this seems only a business note; so, if you will please excuse me, Mr. Smith, I will read it."

Jack bowed, and stood leaning against a pillar, watching the wreaths of smoke that he was puffing out, until he was recalled by a slight exclamation from Miss Smith, and turned, to see her face wearing a wonderfully mystified look.

"I don't understand, Mr. Smith," she began, holding the letter toward him. "Did you write this?"

"Certainly not," answered Jack, quite as much mystified as his hostess.

"Please read it then, and tell me what it means," she said, putting the note into his hand.

It was dated that noon, and contained but these words: —

"MISS B. SMITH: *Dear Madam*, — Since I saw you this morning, circumstances have occurred which will render it necessary for me to leave the city immediately. I shall therefore, I regret exceedingly to say,

be obliged to relinquish the room which I engaged. Respectfully yours,

"JOHN SMITH."

Jack saw at least part of the blunder now, though he did not quite comprehend about Ned.

However, there was nothing to be done but tell the whole story, which he did, feeling all the time, he fancied, much as our first parents must when about to be expelled from Eden.

But, when he came to the part about Mr. Gleason, Miss Smith's astonishment was unbounded. No one of that name had ever boarded there.

"Indeed," as she explained with some hesitation, "we have never had a boarder; but sister thought it would help along, and we had a nice room to spare."

"And why cannot I occupy it as well as my namesake?" asked Jack boldly, as the blissful idea entered his mind.

"I don't think—that is—perhaps sister might not be willing," stammered Miss Blanche.

"But why?" persisted Jack. "I can give good references, and will gladly pay whatever he agreed to."

"Oh, it is n't that," laughed his companion, too much amused by the whole affair to remember the dignity she tried to assume in her sister's absence. "To tell the truth, Mr. Smith, I am afraid—I mean, inclined to believe that Beatrice will think you are too young."

Jack could hardly keep his gravity, but renewed his assurance of growing old as rapidly as possible; and it was finally agreed, that, in consideration for her sister's headache, Miss Blanche should charitably allow her to remain in blissful ignorance that night, and in the morning Mr. Smith might plead his own case.

That he did so, and effectually, in more cases than one, may be inferred from the fact, that, upon meeting Ned Gleason about three weeks later, he astonished that worthy

by the vehemence with which he thanked him for being the most blessed old blunderer in the world; vowing to the astonished Gleason, —

"Why, I am the happiest man alive, and I owe it all to your stupid fashion of not dating letters."

After considerable delay and much questioning, Ned elicited the facts that he was still boarding with the Misses Smith, who were half-sisters, the elder being some twenty years older than the fair Blanche, the latter of whom had that day consented to be Mrs. Smith instead of Miss Smith, and that they were to be married forthwith, and continue to live in the pretty little cottage.

"But what was the mistake in the first place, Ned?" inquired Jack. "I am quite sure that you said it was number 20 Blank Street."

"I have no doubt I did," returned his friend; "for I thought so, and was quite surprised, when I went there again, to find it was 220. I came back from the mountains sooner than I expected, and went there at once to board. It did n't suit me, however, — was much after the usual sort, — and I left, and am now boarding with my sister."

"But I thought you said it was too far away."

"Well, it is a pretty long ride night and morning; but it is very pleasant when I get there, so I don't mind the journey a great deal."

"But that note" —

"Oh, as to that, I had an idea that you were coming back earlier than you did, and dropped that line to you the first night after I went to 220 Blank Street; so it must have been on your desk a week or more, and, before you received it, I was at my sister's. However, Jack, old fellow, 'all's well that ends well,' and, after all, you must thank me that you ever found Miss Smith's boarding-house, et sequentia, your present state of bliss."

THE GOLCONDA STONE.

BY HENRI MONTCALM.

EUGENE LAWRENCE, a young American of enormous wealth, had a moderate passion for gambling, and an immoderate passion for diamonds. Consequently he lost considerable money at play, and paid out a great deal more in buying up precious stones. But for these two passions of his this story would never have been written.

It was at Paris that Lawrence first met the Count de Rohan, and fell in love with his diamond ring. It was at Madame Duquesne's, and in this wise. Madame was a female gambler of wealth and position. Her villa was just out of Paris, on the Clichy road; and here assembled every evening quite a number of choice spirits, ladies and gentlemen, drawn together by a common love of play. At Madame Duquesne's, indeed, gaming might be said to be carried on in its most moral and respectable, yet in its most reckless, form. Thousands of francs changed hands there every night.

Eugene had driven out to the villa one afternoon with a friend, and, just *pour passer le temps*, a game of *carte* was proposed. A stranger sat down opposite madame, and on Eugene's right, and was introduced as Count de Rohan. He was a slender, well-dressed man, polished and reserved, yet a gentleman rather in the worldly than the broad sense. There was something in the dark face, the gleaming eyes, and the sneer which, despite the heavy mustache, showed itself perpetually upon the thin lips, that was fascinating while it was repulsive—a something which seemed to mark the man "dangerous." As the cards were dealt, and the count reached forward to take his hand, Eugene's attention was suddenly drawn to the ring which he wore upon the little finger of his left hand,—a diamond of great size, and of wonderful brilliancy and beauty. No man with such a ring could easily pass himself off for a poor man. To one at all versed in the matter of diamonds, the stone was unquestionably genuine, and worth, at the very least, fifty thousand francs. The young American had, as has been said, a passion for diamonds, and had bought many. Here was a stone finer than

any he had ever seen outside the crown jewels. He could not keep his eyes off it. He played so stupidly that madame rallied him repeatedly, and his partner grew at last positively angry: all the while the ring occupied his attention to the exclusion of all else. It fascinated and bewitched him, just as a beautiful woman might have done. It seemed to him that he would have sold his very soul to possess it.

Other guests dropped in after a while, and dinner was served. Eugene managed to place himself beside the count, and upon his left. The wonderful diamond was gaining power over him every moment. For the ring's sake, he was polite to a fault to a man whom he would otherwise have treated with haughty indifference. The stranger, reserved though he was, thawed perceptibly under this persistent attention. As the evening advanced, the two became apparently good friends; and when, at an unusually early hour, the company broke up, Eugene's friend having already departed, he offered the count a seat in his carriage, and they drove back to town together.

"Where shall I leave you?" Eugene asked, when they were at last fairly within the city limits. "Or," he continued, "if you are not too tired, what do you say to a cigar and bottle of hock, *chez moi*?"

The count readily accepted Lawrence's invitation, and they drove to the latter's rooms at the Hotel d'L—. And there, when both were warmed to still greater intimacy and freedom, the American ventured to speak of what just then lay nearest his heart.

"You have a beautiful diamond there," he said, at last, as De Rohan put forth his hand to take the glass which his host had just refilled again.

The count seemed to freeze up at once at mention of the ring. "Yes," was all he answered, and spoke of something else. Presently, however, Eugene, not to be defeated by a mere change of manner, broached the subject again.

"I beg your pardon," he said, pleasantly, "but we Americans are a privileged people,

you know. I am passionately fond of diamonds. Would you please let me look at yours?"

The count hesitated a moment, then, with evident reluctance, drew the ring from his finger, and gravely placed it on the table. It was a Golconda stone, very peculiarly set, being held in the fangs of a golden snake, which was made to coil several times around the finger. Eugene indulged in the most rapturous expressions of admiration and envy as he examined it more closely; and the count's features finally relaxed a little, and he smiled frankly, saying:

"It is for you to pardon me, my friend. Perhaps I was rude not to show you the ring at once, since it seems to give you so much pleasure; but—it has been in my family a long while, and there are many painful associations connected with it. I do not like to have it noticed; it is rarely, indeed, that I wear it."

But Eugene was hardly listening to this. He was turning the stone back and forth in his hand, and admiring it.

"Excuse me once more," he said, again. "I know I am impertinent, but—may I ask at how much you value this stone?"

"I am told it is worth sixty thousand francs. I would not sell it for a hundred thousand."

Eugene grew reckless. "I will give you a hundred thousand for it!" he said, boldly, looking the other straight in the face.

In spite of himself, there came into the count's dark eyes a gleam of satisfaction at these words. But he was his cool self again on the instant.

"Monsieur Lawrence," he said, with a grieved, half-injured air, "you have no right to tempt me thus. I am poorer than you think. I have more than one debt of honor that troubles me; and, unless I win money this week, I must raise it upon the ring. But, believe me, I would almost as soon part with my life. Only for my honor's sake would I think of such a thing."

"At least," Eugene cried, now full of hope that the coveted stone might yet become his, "promise me that you will come to me first. I will give you more than anybody else."

"I promise," replied the other, briefly; and then he again changed the subject.

Two days later Lawrence met the count again. He had done nothing but think of that marvellous stone ever since his first

sight of it, and he could not forbear speaking of it at once.

"Count," he said, abruptly, "you must let me have that ring. I believe I am going crazy over it."

The count stood still, considering a moment. Then he took the younger man gently by the arm, and walked along with him.

"I could not think of parting with it for less than one hundred thousand francs; and it really is not worth—"

"I will gladly give that much!" interrupted the other, eagerly.

"Do you fully understand," the count persisted, "that the stone is worth little more than half that sum?"

"Yes, yes! I understand, perfectly."

"Well, sir,—here, take the ring. I do not hesitate to trust you with it. Wear it for two days—take it to the best jewellers in town, and make sure that it is genuine. If, at the end of that time, you still desire to possess it, then—" Here the count's voice dropped, and his face became gloomy. "Then I will let you have it—though I believe my ancestors will turn over in their graves."

Eugene, overjoyed, received the ring, and hastily taking leave of the count, went with his prize at once to the best judge of diamonds in Paris. The stone was pronounced genuine, without a doubt, and one of the finest in the world, worth at least sixty-five thousand francs. The young man was delighted, and went home to gloat over it by himself. Alas! his joy was short-lived. De Rohan came in the next day with a downcast look.

"Monsieur Lawrence," he said, dejectedly, "I am come to disappoint you. I know I promised to sell you the stone; but I throw myself upon your mercy. It is more to me than I thought—I cannot part with it. I beg you to give me back my ring. I will raise the money some other way."

There were actually tears in the dark eyes as the foreigner uttered these words, and Eugene felt that it would be ungenerous to urge him farther. Of course he could not do otherwise than restore the ring, though he did so with a reluctance scarcely less than that which the count himself might have felt at parting with it. It was only the next Saturday that he was called to London, and then home at once to America.

Eugene Lawrence had been home from Europe nearly a year now, and yet all that

time he had never forgotten Count de Rohan's diamond. He thought of it often—thought of it always, too, with a sigh of regret, as one sometimes thinks of a beautiful woman whom he has failed to win. Probably he wanted it all the more because he had been unable to get it. It is human nature, after all, to value a thing most when it belongs to somebody else. But it seems that he had not yet seen the last of the Golconda stone.

By what could not but strike him as a remarkable fatality, Eugene, being in Boston one afternoon in August, intending to return to New York by rail, at the last moment met a friend who was going on the same night by the Fall-River steamboat, and who persuaded him to go that way.

Just at dusk, as the vast steamer was making its way down the east passage, before reaching Newport, as the two were sitting together on the after-deck, Eugene found his cigar had gone out, and was obliged to appeal to a stranger beside him for a light. This stranger, he had before noticed, was a stout, jolly-looking individual, in a gray business suit. He had been sitting there smoking a long while, with his feet on the rail. He took his own cigar from his mouth, and politely knocked the ashes from it before handing it to Lawrence. As he did so, the light of the cabin lamps fell full upon his hand; and there, right before our hero's eyes, flashing and scintillating with a brilliancy that could not be mistaken, was his old sweetheart, the *Golconda stone*. He recognized it on the instant, positively, and beyond a doubt. If he could have been mistaken about the stone, there was the gold snake in whose fangs it rested, familiar to him as though he himself had worn it all his life. So astonished was he, and delighted, too, at this unexpected event, that his hand trembled violently as he mechanically took the offered cigar and lit his own with it. And presently, when the stout stranger moved away, he followed, and addressed him.

It did not seem to Eugene at all necessary to beat about the bush with this person, whom he took to be some vulgar American, made rich by the sale of butter or lard or some other such oily commodity; a representative of the later aristocracy.

"Sir," he said, placing his hand on the stout man's shoulder, "may I inquire where you got that ring?"

The stranger looked around, surprised, and apparently startled.

"That ring!" he exclaimed, in a voice of alarm. "Why? Wasn't it his'n?"

"Wasn't it whose?"

"Why, the man I bought it of—the count."

"So De Rohan sold it, after all, did he?" Eugene said, in a lower tone, half to himself and half to the stout man.

"Ye-,," responded the other, opening his eyes. "How the deuce did you know? Acquainted with the count?"

"How much did you give him for it?" demanded Lawrence, not heeding the question.

"Wal, you see he was hard up. Ben playin' high, I guess. He let me have it for fifty thousand francs; that's nigh onto ten thousand dollars, I reckon."

"I will give you twice that amount for it—a hundred thousand francs!"

"Whew! You will? My friend, it's yours, by gracious! Got the money with you?"

The present owner of the stone was not so slow at driving a bargain as the count had been.

"I will get it for you to-morrow morning," Eugene answered. "Where shall I meet you?"

"To-morrow morning?" said the stout man, deliberating. "Afraid I can't see you then. I s'pose you mean business?"

"I do." And Eugene smiled, in spite of himself, at the other's simplicity.

"Wal, I tell you what. You come around to the office of the A—House at half-past eight to-morrow night. Bring the money with you, and the ring is yours."

"I will be there," Lawrence said, briefly, and the conversation ended.

An hour before the appointed time found Eugene impatiently pacing the floor at the A—House. It seemed to him that that hour never would pass, and he constantly tortured himself with the fear that the stranger would repent himself of his bargain, and fail to appear. At half-past eight precisely, however, the man he waited for entered, looking provokingly cool and unconcerned.

"You kind of looked as if you was set on havin' that ring when you spoke up last night."

Then he drew it from his finger, and placed it in Eugene's hand, receiving the money in return. The diamond sparkled in

the gaslight, brilliant and beautiful as of old. Eugene stood fondling it and feasting his eyes on it, while the stranger stepped one side to count the notes. Then the latter came back, the two shook hands with expressions of mutual good-will, and separated.

Lawrence went straight to his room, but could hardly sleep, so excited was he at obtaining the stone at last. It was not until he came once more to look at it by daylight, that he fancied, somehow or other, that it was less brilliant than it used to be, and less clear. The more he looked at it the more he became convinced of this. What could it mean? A horrible suspicion seized him. He went off directly after breakfast, and asked an experienced jeweller his opinion of the stone. The man looked at it carefully a long while, and then handed it back.

"It is the best imitation I ever saw," he said.

Eugene stared at him angrily. "Do you mean to tell me that is paste?" he gasped, at last.

"Most certainly; though if I were not an expert, I should not dream of it. If it were genuine, it would be worth eight or ten thousand dollars. As it is so good an imitation, and set in gold, it may be worth fifty or sixty. Where did you get it?"

But Eugene did not stop to tell the jeweller where he got it. He went straight to the police, and put them on the track of a

stout, jolly-looking personage in a gray business suit. They never found him, though, and the twenty thousand dollars was a dead loss, never to be made good.

Our hero often wondered if the count was a party to the fraud. The facts were probably as follows: De Rohan was a real count, and also a real rascal. The whole thing had been a cleverly contrived and cunningly executed plot, so devised as to save the count's reputation, and yet enable him to profit by Eugene's passion for diamonds. He had purposely thrown himself in Eugene's way,—his reluctance to part with the stone, and his final departure from his agreement, were mere pretence; and the stout man was no doubt a tool of his, sent to America for the express purpose of tempting Lawrence with the Golconda stone a second time, and changing it for the paste one at the last moment. The fraud would have been perpetrated at an earlier period but for Eugene's sudden departure from Paris.

The young American, as he finally saw through the whole plot, could not help admitting to himself that it was extremely well done; and, after all, he did not feel very much ashamed that he had allowed himself to be so imposed upon. Not one man in a thousand, probably, could have helped himself under the same circumstances. The thing he regretted most, after all, was that he was as far as ever from possessing The Golconda Stone.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE AT BRIGHTON.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

How many of the worthy citizens of Boston are aware of the fact, that when they adopted Brighton as their Twenty-Second Ward, they came into possession of that valuable and interesting commodity—a haunted house?

Such is the case, however, and having just returned from a visit to it, I will, if the readers of the Magazine wish, give them an account of the ruinous mansion.

It is not generally called *haunted*, you must understand. On the contrary, the owner (who does not live there, and wishes to sell the property) speaks of it as “a fine old mansion, though now certainly out of repair;” and everybody wonders why it is uninhabited, and why the family who take care of the place do not occupy the more convenient mansion instead of the farmhouse.

Of course there are no ghosts there! Certainly not! No well-educated and rightly brought up person believes in *ghosts* now-a-days. But ask any member of the afore-said family why they prefer the farmhouse, and with a glance over the shoulder, and in a mysterious whisper, they will confide to you “there are too many *noises* in the large house. Mind, this is a profound secret.”

Of course it is. Just as profound as that of the young lady whom I met at an evening party not long since. While waiting for the dancing to begin, she went the round of the dressing-room, confiding to each of her “most intimate friends” (and their name might have been Legion) “the newest style of *doing up crimps*,” adding/each time an audible entreaty, “don’t tell *any one*, for it’s a profound secret.”

But nevertheless that was, “once on a time,” a fine old house, though it now stands half ruined, amidst the splendid trees that guard it like faithful sentinels; and many doubtless were the stately dames and courtly gentlemen who gathered there.

Before visiting the house, I interviewed an old woman whose father had charge of the place at the time when the incidents occurred which gave it the unenviable reputation of being haunted, and from her I obtained the following story:

Long years ago the estate was owned by Colonel A. Here let me remark that when my grandmother relates some wonderful

tale of olden times, and I exclaim, “Why, grandma, I’ll write a story about that!” she always says, “Now, Anna, *don’t*, child! There are some folks living yet, and it might hurt their feelings.”

So, it being an undeniable fact that there are some folks living yet, and that it would be unkind to hurt their feelings, if they have any, I dutifully “don’t.” Ah me! how little the world dreams of the interesting articles it thus loses!

I was about to state that the gentleman in question did not receive the first letter of the alphabet either as his surname, handed down from a long line of illustrious ancestors, or as a baptismal appellation, but in deference to my grandmother’s views on such subjects. I will thus designate him, and if you are not satisfied with this, you are quite at liberty to call him by any other letter down to Z! Thus far, but no further! I solemnly protest against any hero of mine being termed *Amperсанд!*

Well, Colonel A. had great possessions; amongst the rest, he was possessed of, or by, a very quick temper. Nevertheless, he and his wife and children managed to live in great apparent peace and prosperity, until the eventful night on which the ghost is supposed to have first come into existence. Now the birthday, or night, of a ghost is something a little out of the common course of events, but there seems to have been no expectation or preparation in the family.

The son was in Europe completing his studies. The two daughters were in Boston with their maternal grandparents. Colonel A. and his wife retired as usual to their room that night, and that was the last that ever was seen of them.

My informant says she was not born then, but has often heard her father and mother describe their *astonishment* when her father, next morning, found a letter on the table, instructing him to close the house, and remain at the farmhouse to take charge of the place.

This he did, and *fourteen years* afterward the two daughters, then grown up, came with their grandfather to visit the place.

Then, *for the first time*, the bedroom which Colonel A. and his wife had occupied was unlocked, and everything was found as they

had left it. The bedclothes were thrown back, as if they had risen hurriedly; the lady's slippers were by the bedside, and a half-burned candle stood on a small table, with the extinguisher over it.

The old lady who told me all this says she was then about six or seven years old, and remembers how much overcome the three visitors were by these silent mementos of their absent friends, of whom nothing had ever been heard.

Now it strikes me as quite natural that they *should* be agitated. I fancy I should be, to go into a room that had been shut up in that state for fourteen years! For pity's sake, why didn't the man, or if he didn't know how, his wife, make the bed, when they found the house deserted, and tidy up the room generally, and not leave it in that state, to harrow up the feelings of the relatives.

The ghostly part of the story is, that on the night of their flight (from what, or to what, no one knows) they were met as they were leaving the house by one of the negro servants, and in the fear of being hindered or pursued, Colonel A.'s quick temper for the time *possessed him*, and, killing the negro, he dragged him to the cellar, and laid him on a chest of gold which he had previously buried there, remarking that he could take care of the gold till he returned.

Now what I want to know is, to whom did he address this remark?

I incline to the opinion that it must have been to his unfortunate victim, who henceforth prowled about repeating those words, and that when the subsequent inhabitants have imagined that they heard wild snatches of song, or unaccountable moving of chairs in vacant apartments, or rattling of china in the closets, and yet could find nothing displaced, that it was in reality but the echo of this poor fellow's ceaseless refrain—"till I come back, till I come back."

One thing which happened in after years proves with startling distinctness that ghosts have at least one attribute in common with everyday mortals—the faculty of disposing of money! A lady who had lived for years in the house had occasion one day to go into her wine-cellar, when the ground gave way beneath her, and she fell into a hole some three feet in depth. On examination it was found that this cavity contained only some pieces of wood much like the rotten remains of an old box or chest, thus proving conclusively that the ghost, unfaithful to the

last command of his master, had spent the money, and left only the empty chest!

With the laudable determination of finding out all I could in regard to the ghost, I carefully searched all those parts of the house in which a respectable ghost—one connected with an old family—would be supposed to appear—such as the parlors, dining-room, library, etc. The dark closets and passages with which, like all old houses, the mansion abounds, and in which, of course, I should find only dust and cobwebs, I avoided, and while just congratulating myself upon having so thoroughly performed my task, my escort called out:

"See here, Miss Morris! Here is the old wine-cellar! Now for discoveries!"

"Down there?" I cried, looking with dismay into the black chasm which the half-opened door revealed. "Do you not know that it is very unhealthy to go into a place like that when it has been closed for years?"

"Unhealthy!" he echoed, mockingly. "There is plenty of good air down there! Just see!" and he struck a lucifer, which, it must be confessed, burnt brightly enough.

"Now will you come?" he called from the bottom of the stairs.

I looked down again, thought of the possibility of the stairs being rotten, and giving way as I descended—remembered that the hole where the chest was buried might still be uncovered, and I might fall into it in the dark, and summoning all my resolution, when he again called "Will you come?" I answered courageously, "No!" dashed out of the house, and through the garden, never stopping till I was well on my way home, and my companion overtook me breathless with running.

"Why didn't you come down cellar?" he asked. "Were you afraid?"

"Afraid?" I repeated, indignantly. "By no means, but it is nearly dark, and I promised grandma to be home before supper."

So I walked on in dignified silence, and asked no questions as to the result of his explorations, but to satisfy the curious, I will add that I just heard him tell grandma "that he couldn't see anything down there, as he hadn't another match, and that he tumbled up stairs."

I do not quite comprehend how he accomplished this feat, as it sounds contrary to all laws of gravitation, so I will leave my readers to explain it to their own satisfaction, hoping that they are now sufficiently posted in regard to the Haunted House at Brighton.

THE HEIR OF MILLINGFORD REACH.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

[NO. 8.—TO BE COMPLETED IN FOUR NUMBERS.]

CHAPTER VI.

A voice in the stable-yard beneath the window of the comfortable little room to which mine host of the Jolly Anglers had shown me the night before roused me from my sleep while yet the morning's gray hung over the scene. It stirred my blood, even in the sluggishness of sleep, and brought me to my feet with that startled consciousness of having waked for some purpose. It was the voice of John Jourdain. Thinking of the scene I had witnessed the night before, I ground my teeth savagely, while the angry torrent seethed through my heart, as I rushed to the window and looked down. He was there, mounted on a noble black hunter, and idly snapping his ebony-mounted riding-whip, as he talked carelessly with the landlord. I pushed up my window carefully to listen.

"A fine morning truly, good Gregory. I thought it best to ride over and get a whiff of the air before the sun had baked everything. So matters have sped satisfactorily with you in my absence? House filled all the time, — tap-room crowded. That's the state of things for the Jolly Anglers. I'll be bound your pockets are getting well lined. Own up now, Gregory."

I could see by the fluttered, delighted air of the landlord that this familiar talk and condescending manner was a new experience. It was almost ludicrous to see his anxiety to show his appreciation of such good nature, and his trepidation lest he should overstep the bounds, and provoke ill nature again.

"Now you don't mean all that, sir. Things are not quite so fine as you picture. Not but the Jolly Anglers is getting pretty well known; and, though I do say it who ought n't, there's not a better table or a cleaner house in the shire. If your honor'd

please to walk in and try a glass of our ale now."

And Boniface rubbed his hands gleefully, and his twinkling blue eyes overflowed with delight.

Antoine was just coming out from the stable, and made a slight gesture, to which his master responded.

"Ay, ay, good Gregory, get ready the draught, and I'll be there at once. Here, Antoine, I want you."

Gregory hurried away into the house, and Antoine came up to the side of the black hunter. Master and man were both directly beneath my window, unconscious of the watchful eyes above them.

"Well, Antoine, have you learned anything?" demanded John Jourdain, bending down toward the valet with a gleaming eye.

"There was no woman came at all last night," replied the servant; "only one gentleman for a guest. Bill Sikes tells me he's sure about it."

The riding-whip was snapped viciously, and the old black reared and pricked up his ears.

"Try the other place then. I am not equal to any more than the ride over to the Terrace. I'll wait here with old Gregory, and you may take the horse and come back with the dog-cart. I am dreadfully shaken by the night's work. Be sure you put plenty of the cordial in the box."

"Do you think it is prudent for you to go?" questioned Antoine, in the most respectful manner. "You look" —

"I must go," returned John Jourdain, with an oath. "I should think such a night as that I have just suffered might answer for one while. I will get home as soon as possible. Perdition seize that doctor! His famous medicine is no better than so much milk and water. If the attacks in-

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crease in violence as they have done, it will make a finish of me before long."

The tone was that of mingled rage and bitterness, and he glanced about the yard apprehensively, to make sure that no one was within hearing. I held my breath, fearing that glittering eye might pierce through the thin white curtain of my window and discover me.

But the landlord came out to see why his guest lingered, and, slowly dismounting, John Jourdain passed into the little parlor, where the distinguished guests of the Jolly Anglers were received. He remained quite two hours at the inn, and all that time I was compelled to keep my room, in a most impatient frame of mind. The man-servant came to my door twice to know if I was ready to come down to breakfast; and at last, in sheer desperation, I pleaded a headache, and asked for coffee and toast to be brought to my room. I was nervously anxious, fearing that the loquacious Boniface might let out to him that I had ordered a carriage to take me to the Terrace, and thus give him a suspicion of my identity. But at length, from behind my retreat at the white-curtained chamber window, I had the pleasure of seeing Antoine appear in a light open carriage, with a pair of bay horses. His master entered the carriage at once, and drove rapidly away; whereupon I descended, assumed as nonchalant an air as possible, called for my bill, and asked for the chaise which I had ordered the night before.

"Well," said the landlord, bustling around the room, after he had deposited the bank bill I had paid him in his greasy pocket-book, "they can't complain but we give them plenty of company from this way. This is the third carriage to drive off from here this morning for Eglantine Terrace. It would have been a saving of horse-flesh to have all gone in one carriage."

"The *third*—some one else then has gone?"

"I should think so. We had a message late last night to come over to Judge Morton's for the young woman, to take her a matter of six miles; and Jim, who is just back with the horse and chaise, says he left her at Colonel Cathart's gate."

"And that, with myself, is two. There was a third, you say?"

"To be sure—Mr. John Jourdain, one of our rising young men, a wonderfully

talented young gentleman, much sought by the gentry, and heir to one of the finest places in our shire. He was here taking a glass of my ale. I wish you had been up to see him; but you'll meet him, of course, at the colonel's."

"Mr. Jourdain—Mr. John Jourdain—oh, yes, I have already met him. And did you tell him of the sudden influx of visitors toward the Terrace?"

"No. I did n't know then that the young woman had gone there at all. But here comes the chaise, sir."

I was whirling on my way toward Colonel Cathart's in a few moments after. I bade the dull-faced boy who held the reins drive briskly. I did not expect to keep time with John Jourdain's blooded horses, but I wanted to arrive in season to have a word to say, whether comedy or tragedy ruled in the final act. I suspected that Catharine Cathart might carry matters with a high hand, and knew her mother was ready to sympathize in her mood, so that only the easy, good-natured colonel would be inclined to say a word in extenuation of this misdemeanor of the governess.

I had worked myself into a pretty state of excitement picturing the scene which probably awaited me, but when I arrived at the Terrace I rallied my self-possession, and walked coolly enough into the little parlor, where the lackey informed me the family were assembled. A suppressed excitement was visible, although every one rose and greeted me with cordiality. Eveline Eaton was sitting at the bay-window, with her shawl on her shoulders, and her bonnet lying in her lap, her fingers nervously rolling the ribbon strings. The colonel was not present, nor was John Jourdain visible. I took in the situation at a glance. The head of the family had gone for a candid consultation with the friend of the family, and upon the weighty opinion of the latter hung the decision. Miss Catharine was looking superbly haughty, Madge carelessly curious, their mother nervous and fidgety. As for Eveline Eaton, her face was very pale and sad, but a fixed, steady determination shone within the depths of her eyes, as she turned them for one brief moment on my face. I returned her a brave, encouraging smile. There was little attempt at conversation, and it was a relief when the colonel made his appearance, though he wore a grave, embarrassed look. He went up to

Eveline's side, and spoke his words swiftly, as though to be soon rid of a disagreeable duty.

"I regret to tell you, Miss Eaton, I cannot, consistently with my duty to my little daughter, and my respect for my family, allow the relations between us to continue. It grieves me very deeply, for I have hitherto looked upon you with affectionate regard. Still there is no other course before me."

While he spoke, he laid a bank note upon her hand. It fluttered to the floor as Eveline rose to her feet, very pale, but with a grand, impressive dignity.

"You mean that I am no longer fit to be the governess of little May, sir. Is that the literal interpretation of your words?" asked she.

The colonel looked pained and embarrassed.

"Really, Miss Eaton, I would rather not discuss the matter. I would have our relations terminate as amicably as possible."

"Ah, sir, that may be very comfortable for you, but do you forget how cruel and shameful an accusation it may be for me?" continued Eveline, her voice rising and gathering strength as she proceeded. "I think I have a right to demand an explicit reason for your sudden dissatisfaction. Have I failed in any of my duties to May?"

"No, no," hastily replied the kind-hearted colonel, sorely distressed at his position. "You have suited us admirably, but—but—the world will talk—you can't overlook such things, and yesterday's indiscretion"—

"*Indiscretion!*" echoed Catharine, with a sarcastic laugh.

Just a momentary scarlet flushed the pale cheeks of the governess, and an indignant sparkle glistened in her eye as she turned to the last speaker.

"I am not conscious that it deserves even so mild a name as that, Miss Cathart," she said. "I remained a short time at Mr. Jourdain's house to find something I valued exceedingly, which was lost. Not wishing to detain your party, and knowing that I could stay at a kind friend's in the village through the night, I thoughtlessly yielded to my first impulse to obtain what I had lost."

"What was it, Miss Eaton, that you lost? and why should you still remain after darkness fell? for Antoine was telling Lizette in my hearing he left the house after dark,

and you were there in his master's room," said Mrs. Cathart, coming to her husband's relief.

"Has Colonel Cathart asked Mr. Jourdain? I saw them go together to the library. What does Mr. Jourdain say? A word from him could set me right."

"Precisely," replied the colonel, a little indignant at her persistence, "and he does not speak at all. I could not get anything but gentlemanly evasions, until I appealed to his friendship to answer me honestly. 'Well,' said he, 'one question, just one, I will answer.' And I asked him, 'If May were a daughter of yours, Jourdain, — a pure, innocent child, — would you give her into the charge of this girl, who lingered so strangely at your house?'"

"And what did he answer?" demanded Eveline, in a quick, nervous voice.

"He said 'No,' Miss Eaton."

"Cruel, hard-hearted plotter!" ejaculated the girl. "Heaven be praised that I escaped out of his hands, as if by the very interposition of Heaven itself. And yet, Colonel Cathart, the reason I did not leave before dark was because John Jourdain had locked me into a room of that house, and threatened that I should not leave it until I had promised to marry him."

"To marry him! — the poor, unknown governess to marry John Jourdain!" ejaculated Catharine, rising from her seat with scarlet cheeks. "Really, this effrontery is too much."

"Hush, Catharine! you forget yourself," said her father, with a reproving glance.

The young lady sat down with an angry toss of her head, as she glanced again toward the obnoxious governess.

"You are making a very grave charge, Miss Eaton. Pray do not add falsehood to your previous indiscretion. Remember that we ourselves saw that it was your voluntary will to remain. Would you repeat this same accusation if Mr. Jourdain were present?" said the colonel, in a voice that was actually stern.

A little quiver went over her face, but she still held her voice steady.

"Of course I would, and far more than that. I would tell you how he has persecuted me from the very first of his appearance here. How the plot was laid to ruin my reputation, and drive me from this hitherto peaceful home into his hateful protection. How he has stolen from me the

proofs that would give to me a home and fortune of my own" — She paused to take breath and choke back a sob.

Here came another derisive laugh from the infuriated and jealous Catharine. Colonel Cathart rang the bell, and gave the order for Mr. Jourdain's summons in a troubled voice, and then crossed to me, whispering, —

"I am glad you are here. I fancy you were as much taken in as I. The girl is certainly a desperate character, and scruples at no audacity. Jourdain as much as confessed to her guilt."

"One of them is undoubtedly guilty of falsehood, if nothing further," returned I. "Let us see what he will say."

John Jourdain came in with more nonchalance than I was prepared for. There was a little embarrassed look, but only what was natural considering the nature of the discussion, and the presence of the young ladies. I really believe that much was counterfeited, the better to further his part. He went directly to Catharine, whose flushed, indignant face betrayed the extent of her interest in the affair.

"It is an odious termination to my little fete. I am very sorry about it, Miss Catharine."

"Sorry because she will not marry you? How long since you have played the role of the disconsolate and desperate lover?"

He opened the great Jewish eyes, made a ring of the crimson lips under the glossy black mustache, and ejaculated, in the most admirably counterfeited amazement; —

"Who will not marry me?"

Every eye was on his face, and every one, I knew, except the helpless girl and myself, was entirely convinced of his innocence and her depravity.

"Why, the young lady yonder. She says you locked her in the room, — that you have persecuted her to compel her to become your wife," returned Catharine, triumphantly.

A musical laugh rippled over his lips. He shrugged his graceful shoulders with a comical grimace.

"And I have been refused, have I? It is astonishing how I managed to summon up fortitude enough to bear so heart-rending a trial. Did the fair damsel state the reason of her cruel indifference? Perhaps I may be able to overcome it."

While he spoke, he looked from Catha-

rine back to Colonel Cathart, but never once glanced toward Eveline Eaton.

"It is really too absurd, Miss Eaton. I am very sorry that you have so completely forfeited my good opinion. Pray oblige us by leaving us to forget the matter as speedily as possible. I was wrong to give a moment's credence to so preposterous an assertion. I will send the carriage with you wherever you desire; but spare us any further folly," said the colonel, wincing beneath his eye.

"I will go as soon as you please, Colonel Cathart, after I have spoken. It is my right to demand a hearing. This man's persecution may not seem so preposterous when I tell you that I am not quite so humble and friendless and poverty-stricken as you think. Heaven be praised, I have a witness to corroborate this assertion. John Jourdain — standing so coolly yonder, and counterfeiting so adroitly to work the ruin of an innocent girl — seeks to marry me, not from any love for me, — his black, sordid heart holds not so pure a sentiment as love, — but because I am the only child of Ada Derne, who married Richard Eaton. Mr. Romaine, I appeal to you to give proof of my assertion."

"It is true," answered I, briefly; "the young lady stands between the Millingford property and the gentleman present."

Colonel Cathart bit his lip, and glanced apprehensively into Mr. Jourdain's face. My eyes were upon it too, and I longed to rush upon him and throttle him for his almost superhuman command of his features, for he still wore that calm, amused, slightly satirical smile.

The poor colonel was half beside himself with perplexity. I thought it better to add another fact to set him right.

"I have been aware of the young lady's identity for some time, Colonel Cathart. Squire Dingley is at present at work gathering all the evidence needed to prove her identity, without the aid of her mother's private papers, which were stolen from the person in whose custody they were left. So much is certainly true."

Eveline gave me a grateful glance, and added, eagerly, —

"The whole trouble comes from those papers. While I was at Mr. Jourdain's house, a servant girl took me one side and asked if my name was Eaton; and, when I answered yes, she asked, had I ever lost

such and such a box?" My heart was ready to leap for joy as I told her that I had. "Find an excuse to ask Mr. Jourdain to let you see his portfolio of engravings," said she, "and I will show you where it is, and if you please you may take it again. I'm not one to stand and see a poor motherless girl wronged." Oh! I see now it was one of his malignant devices, but I thought then it was right for me to try for the possession of the proofs of my legitimate claim upon the estate bequeathed to me. I am telling the truth,—oh, believe me! I am telling the truth!"

She was looking straight into my face, and I returned a calm, encouraging smile, and she proceeded:—

"As soon as you had gone, the girl slipped away, and, when I would have followed, the key was turned upon me. Then Mr. Jourdain came. I will not harrow my own feelings, nor shock you, by the repetition of all the wicked, threatening language he used,—the horrible punishment he promised if I refused to marry him that very night. Heaven only knows to what lengths he might have gone: it may be he would have stained his soul with the murder he declared himself capable of committing. But a merciful Providence opened the way for my escape. He was seized with some strange, appalling visitation, and could not stir to molest or detain me. I took the key of the room from his pocket, unlocked the door, and fled away in the darkness. Let him look me in the face and deny it if he can."

She spoke with a solemnity profoundly impressive, even upon the prejudiced listeners about her. John Jourdain's clear, ringing laugh floated out almost as soon as her low, deep tones had ceased.

"A highly romantic and well-told story, young woman. I can bring my servants to say a word in the matter. I take it you will require at least one witness to your tragical scene, to have it thoroughly believed."

"Yes, Miss Eaton, you certainly ought to have some corroborating circumstance at least," said the colonel.

Poor Eveline clasped her hands sorrowfully.

"Alas, I have only Heaven. I told you how it was. There was no one there, or my screams for help would have been answered."

Again John Jourdain's triumphant laugh—low, emphatic, fiendishly exultant—rang out. It sent every drop of blood vibrating hotly through my veins.

"It will be a rather dangerous precedent to establish, if either plaintiff or defendant is given the verdict according to their own testimony. Colonel Cathart, shall I send for my man or the maid-servants? You may question them without my going near them," said the arch-fiend, in his cool, confident voice. "We will have at least one witness in the case."

"That can be had without delay," said I, stepping forward, and facing him deliberately. "There is a witness who can testify that every word Miss Eaton spoke is true, and that witness is here. Colonel Cathart, you are aware that I left the carriage at the village. I felt myself called upon to look after this young lady, whose interests Squire Dingley placed in my charge some time ago. I hurried back to Mr. Jourdain's cottage, meeting the servants he had sent away before I reached it. A scream in Miss Eaton's well-known voice decided me to gain a post of observation, at all risks, that I might know when my help was needed. I climbed up the pillar to the lattice, and found footing at a small window looking down into the Bluebeard chamber which excited the ladies' curiosity. It is, by the way, quite as peculiar and unique as the other apartments."

As I said this, I turned and looked again into John Jourdain's face. It was the first symptom he had shown of the slightest perturbation. He colored, bit his lip, and then grew pale again, while he spoke quickly,—

"A nice pair of confederates, are they not, good people? Does this Yankee adventurer expect to share half the estate, and win the fair damsel into the bargain, if he hatches up this iniquitous plot?"

The sneer fell harmless upon me. I was only thinking of the poor colonel's bewilderment. He looked the picture of distress at the predicament his guests had placed him in. Which should he believe? which condemn?

"Send for Squire Dingley," said I, quietly.

He caught at that ray of hope.

"Well, really, gentlemen, I don't see but that is the only way for me."

Eveline came hurrying to my side, the

tears streaming over her face, as she held out her hand.

"You were there, — you were there! Oh, you have indeed saved my good name!"

"A likely story," sneered John Jourdain. "Behold, the damsel is only now made aware that she was rescued by this gallant hero. It is singular that he left her to help herself."

"Perhaps your selfish nature cannot understand how one would spare a young lady's delicacy, and have thought for her good name. I guarded her without her being aware of it. Twice last night my pistol covered your heart. Be thankful to Heaven that your fit of catalepsy came and saved you from the trusty weapon."

This was the second and keenest blow. It was singular how sensitive he could be about this bodily malady, and how insensible to the deadlier imputations of soul disease. He grew blue at the lips, and glared at me like a wild beast, but I went on, calmly, —

"The landlord of the Jolly Anglers will tell you, Colonel Cathart, at what an early hour this young lady arrived in the village, inquiring the way to her friends. Those friends will testify that she was with them, and Squire Dingley must vouch for my character when I relate the previous experience."

At that moment there was heard loud talking on the steps without. Mrs. Cathart rose hastily from the window.

"Colonel, I really believe Squire Dingley is at the door."

The colonel flew out, and returned in a moment dragging in the squire, whose jolly face looked rather forlorn, I fancied. He had evidently heard the whole story, for he rushed up to me, and whispered ruefully, —

"I am so grieved for the young lady. So thoroughly vexed all round, that I don't know what to say."

"Do you mean that you can't help Eveline?" demanded I, in amazement: "now, too, at this hour of her sorest need."

"I would to Heaven that it lay in my power; but this fellow has right and evidence on his side. What can I do about that?"

"You hear, — you hear!" exclaimed Jourdain, triumphantly.

Squire Dingley turned upon him fiercely.

"There 's nothing for *you* to rejoice about. I think your prospects go down

about as thoroughly as any one's can, Mr. John Jourdain."

"There is some misunderstanding, Squire Ned," ventured I. "We are waiting for you to give your testimony to the truthfulness of Miss Eaton's claim to be the daughter of Richard Eaton and Ada Derne, and the heir to the Millingford property, who supersedes the claim of this John Jourdain who is present."

"To be sure, to be sure. I am thoroughly convinced of the matter. I have n't a doubt every word she tells you is the profound truth. That man, standing so defiantly there, is capable of any villainy that will help him on his way to the coveted fortune. I never doubted that, — never. I gave myself heartily to the work of substantiating Miss Eaton's claim, because I dreaded to see the dear old place pass into such wicked hands."

So spoke the squire, warmly and heartily.

John Jourdain faced him, and said defiantly, — while an evil, sardonic smile was on his ghastly lips, and a baleful, sinister cunning in his eye, —

"I dare you to do your best. I will contest the matter to the last minute of my life. Let her produce her proofs, not alone of her identity, but of the legality of her claim. Who knows that Ada Derne ever married? Where is her marriage certificate; the church record?"

"Double-dyed villain!" returned Squire Ned indignantly, "you thought you had made sure of your own possession by stealing those papers from a defenceless orphan. I could almost rejoice, were it not for Miss Eveline's loss, that this new development puts the whole thing beyond your machinations. To dispute or to uphold Eveline Eaton's claim has nothing to do with you, John Jourdain; neither has Eveline Eaton, true daughter that she is of the legally married Ada Derne, anything to say. Millingford Reach has been demanded by the son of Raymond Millingford; a son who brings the proofs of his legitimate birth, and bears his father's name. He arrived yesterday from America."

The words were spoken impressively; and I am sure that upon one pair of ears at least they fell like a thunderbolt. I dropped down upon a seat, my limbs actually refusing to support me; and it was several moments before I dared to look over to Eveline's face. She had concealed it from

every one's observation by clasping over it her two slender white hands, but I saw the slow tears slipping through. An irresistible impulse led me to cross over to her side, and lay my hand upon her shoulder. She looked up with a tremulous smile, and said in a low voice, —

"You see that Cinderella is back again to her chimney-corner. I am afraid it were better that I had never cherished such delusive hopes. I am a governess always now, and must find a new home."

I bent down lower, so that my low-breathed, earnest words could reach only her ears.

"Eveline," I said, "am I selfish in finding one cause for rejoicing in this unexpected change? When you were heiress to that great property, I compelled my love for you to remain silent. Now I am ready to declare it proudly. I am young and strong, and Heaven has given me some talent. In America, at least, I am sure of a competence. Let me engage you for the governess of my home and heart."

She had made no movement or gesture of answer, and the opportunity for me to speak again was lost by the sudden and agitated tumult which ensued. It began with a low shriek from Catharine Cathart, and then a wild exclamation from her mother. I turned hastily to ascertain the cause. There stood John Jourdain, his handsome face still dark with the evil emotions within, but with the eyes overspread by a cold, glassy stare, and rolled upward, the features wearing a fixed, iron look, the upright, graceful figure rigid as if carved out of stone.

"It is a miraculous confirmation of my words, Miss Catharine," exclaimed Eveline, in a voice of awe. "Just such a visitation came upon him in the midst of his violent threats, and set me free. You will believe me now."

"Send for Antoine," added I. "He will know just what should be done. And pray let us leave him. From what I have seen and heard, the most distressing part is yet to come. The catalepsy leaves him with epileptic spasms, or his room would not be so carefully cushioned at the walls. Pray, ladies, withdraw, and spare yourselves the painful sight."

Catharine Cathart was the first to move. She drew away her gaze from the stiff, rigid figure, with a strong shudder. I fan-

ciated she was completely disenchanted. At all events, she was thoroughly humiliated; for she held out her hand to Eveline as she passed her, saying, simply but very impressively, —

"I beg your pardon, Miss Eaton."

CHAPTER VII.

I dragged Squire Ned away from the colonel's endless inquiries something like two hours after John Jourdain's writhing, convulsed form had been carefully transported to his own carriage, under Antoine's guardianship.

Poor Antoine! His consternation and alarm were pitiable, and it all seemed to proceed from his dread of his master's anger when he should learn of the exposure. We pacified him as well as we could, but I certainly did not envy him the experience before him.

Squire Ned was as much shocked as any of them by this unexpected explanation of the mysterious conduct and singular ways of the lion of society, but very thankful, nevertheless, that the eyes of the Catharts were at last opened to the true character of their guest.

"And now about the true heir, — this son of Raymond Millingford. Your advertisements in the American papers brought him up, of course. You have seen him, I judge. What do you think of him, Squire Ned?" I asked, eagerly.

"Ay, lad, I 've seen him, that 's the worst of it. It was a blow, it was a blow, lad."

The ruddy face was downcast, the cheery tone ruefully depressed.

"You do not like him," I said, in deep sympathy for the brave-hearted gentleman's disappointment and vexation.

"I may own the truth to you, lad. The man sickened and disgusted me. I tried to prepare myself for poor manners maybe from his rough education, but I did not think the Millingford blood could flow in the veins of such a lout and mule, and low-natured varlet. The man will run out that magnificent property in a little time, and spend it all in drink, and cards, and indecent companions. He has not a manly or chivalrous trait in him. I would dispute his claim on the very strength of my repugnance, and his lack of the Millingford gentlemanly spirit, but he brings positive

proofs, even the dying declaration of my own poor Raymond, duly witnessed, and a letter from his father in the handwriting I still remember so well. The mother must have been an ill-bred, vulgar woman. And yet how could Raymond Millingford—one of the most fastidious of gentlemen, aristocratic in his nature as well as breeding—ever have married such? And that such a hind should oust my sweet Eveline, and you too, my good lad, almost breaks my heart. That's just the truth of the matter."

"I am very sorry for Eveline's sake, but on some accounts I am selfishly glad. I told you I should never ask her to marry me. See how consistent I am. This very day, when I learned that her great expectations had failed her, I offered her both hand and heart in the most beseeching manner. Though I have received no answer, yet I own it frankly to you, my dear squire."

"I told you I knew how the land lay. But, oh! to think you might have been the host and hostess of Millingford Reach, and to know that it is to be ruled by that low-natured clown, is trying enough."

"He may prove more agreeable than you anticipate," I said, soothingly. "There are some people whose rough exterior hides genuine worth."

"We shall hardly find it so in his case. You must go with me tomorrow, and judge for yourself. The other executors meet with us, and formally make over possession to him." And again the kind-hearted old colonel groaned.

"I will certainly accept your invitation," answered I, "and I hardly think I shall return to the Terrace. I have prolonged my visit now beyond all expectations of my own. It is time I was returning to America and my business there."

"Don't go yet. Why, what was the colonel telling me about getting your assistance in regard to the machinery of the new mill he is bent upon setting up?"

"I have n't heard about it."

"Ah, to be sure, I was n't to say anything about it until he called in his payments and found how matters stood with him. But there is no question about it. He will do it. The thing has been in his head for a long time, and it is a good operation for you both. He'll make it worth while to remain in England a year or so."

"There are some reasons why I should

like it, especially on Eveline's account, that is, if" —

"Pshaw! there is no 'if' about it. It is plain to see you are a couple got up expressly to order. You were made for each other. Now, then, let us go into the house and see if the tumult has subsided. I wonder if it is a mark of particular depravity that I can't help chuckling over the figure our exquisite, nonchalant, autocratic John Jourdain cut today in the presence of his most eager admirers?"

"It will be a terribly humiliating passion that poor Antoine will witness. The man is more wroth at the discovery of his catalepsy than of his iniquity."

"Well, he is turned out of Millingford Reach; there's a little comfort in that."

I accompanied Squire Ned on his return to Dingley Moor, obliging myself to be patient with the single answer from Eveline which came in a brief note, handed to me that morning by Mrs. Cathart.

"Pray do not think me unkind, but I must have time to grow calm and cool; to throw off the excitement of the last few weeks, before I can see my duty plainly."

"EVELINE."

I was more contented, knowing that the Catharts, ashamed of their ungenerous treatment while under the malignant influence of John Jourdain, were determined to keep her at the Terrace.

I was sitting at the deep window of Squire Dingley's library, half hidden by the green damask curtains, entirely engrossed by an American journal which Squire Ned had put into my hands, when Mr. Raymond Millingford entered the room, and I had my first glimpse of him without his being aware of my presence. Squire Ned and Lawyer Nickerson accompanied him, and all three took seats at the long table, on which an endless medley of stationery and printed matter were scattered.

I examined him curiously. His face was partially averted, but I could see a set of coarse features, a pair of bushy, sandy whiskers, a dull gray eye and narrow forehead, accompanying an extremely florid complexion. The figure was scarcely more presentable; ill-proportioned, the joints loosely hung, the gait awkward and shambling, and rendered more distasteful by the exceedingly costly but flashy clothing, which

looked as if only that moment away from the clothier's counter.

He entered with a swagger, and with a consequential air flung himself into the great easy-chair wheeled before Squire Ned's place at the table, and began playing with the enormous seals of his massive watch-guard with the coarse red fingers, on which already blazed a diamond ring.

Something in his looks, but more in his gait, struck me as familiar, and when he spoke I was confirmed in a sudden impression. But I sat quietly for further developments.

"Well, old boys, I reckon this is the last business before us, and tonight I can walk right into my rights. It's hard on a feller to be put off in this style from his own property," he said, with a swaggering air.

"There are few heirs who receive such prompt acceptance, and find so few legal obstacles in their way," replied Lawyer Nickerson, with a frown.

"Well, well, I meant no harm to you, sir. You've treated me like a gentleman, and you shall always have a welcome at Millingford Reach."

"Thank you," returned the lawyer, stiffly, finding the simpleton's patronizing good-nature more irritating than the most unreasonable insolence could be, "my business don't admit of my visiting."

"Is that so? But you shall do all my little jobs for me, anyhow. Sue all the rascals that don't pay up their dues, look after my mortgages, and them sort of affairs. I sha'n't be one to stand and haggle about the price of work you do for me, now I tell you that."

The lawyer gave a little snort of mingled anger and disgust, and began to burrow among his papers as a refuge from the annoyance.

The new heir of Millingford Reach settled himself back in his chair, put his feet up to the table, pulled from his pocket a small tin box filled with tobacco, and gathering up a pinch of leaves, thrust them into his mouth and fell to chewing energetically, meanwhile contemplating with profound satisfaction the sparkling steel buckles of his very brilliant patent-leather shoes, and the massive gold rings on his coarse red fingers.

Poor Squire Ned looked at him a moment, and turned away with a countenance divided between disgust and sorrow.

"Drive ahead, old boy; I'm ready to pay attention and do the signing. I'm in a hurry to get out there, and begin to feel at home. I'm going to give a party pretty quick, and then you'll see how a thing ought to be done. I must make the acquaintance of the gentle folks, you know. Of course they'll all want to know me. There'll be gay times shortly at Millingford Reach, now I tell you that."

He nodded in high glee, first to the lawyer and then to the host, and the latter, seeing that something was required of him, said, disconsolately, —

"I suppose so."

"You may bet your life on that. I've been invited out already, and they say it's a fellow who does n't knock under to everybody. It's mighty civil of him, considering I've cut him out. I'm going to see him just as soon as I get established at the place."

"What's his name?" asked the lawyer, with a sudden show of interest.

"Jourdain, John Jourdain; a mighty civil fellow, if you can tell anything by the looks. He's coming to see me, to stay a while, and show me how the thing ought to be done, after I've made him a visit."

"Indeed! I congratulate you upon the acquisition of Mr. John Jourdain's friendship," retorted the lawyer, dryly. "He has the reputation of being somewhat fastidious."

"But he knows a fellow of true grit. He said there was the right stuff in me. I tell you I am bound to shine when I'm the master of Millingford Reach. I don't like the name very well. Why did n't the old governor call it Millingford Castle, or Millingford Palace? I'll have it grand enough to be called so yet; just you wait, old boys, and you'll see."

"Our palaces and castles are for royal and noble families," answered the lawyer, with a contemptuous smile.

"We're all noble in America; one man's as good as another," the young heir exclaimed, even his dull wits perceiving some thing of the supreme disdain which filled the thoughts of the last speaker. "Maybe you think, sir, that I warn't anybody there, but I can tell you" —

He had spoken thus far in a loud, authoritative, resentful tone, but he paused abruptly, with open mouth and staring eyes, the florid hue of his complexion faded out to a

sickly yellow, as I came forth with extended hand.

"Well, Joe, this is an unexpected meeting. When I left New York I did n't expect to meet you over here under such remarkably propitious circumstances."

His astonishment and embarrassment were ludicrous enough, and it seemed to me rather disproportioned to the case. But I reflected that it must be rather trying to any one's nerves, when just assuming arrogant manners, and asserting one's high position, to be confronted by one who had known him in such wretched circumstances as I had seen Joe Miller.

He had started up from the easy-chair, and stood uneasily shifting from one foot to another, flushing crimson, and paling to sickly yellow. Instinctively he dropped his pompous manners, and gave me the old subservient bow.

"It's you, Mr. Romaine? I 'm sure I did n't think—I don't mean—I"—

"You are a little astonished at seeing me, Joe. I beg your pardon. You are Mr. Raymond Millingford now. I congratulate you heartily upon your wonderful good fortune. Sit down, sit down, sir, don't stand for me."

He sank back into the chair, running his thick fingers through his sandy shock of hair, as if trying to stir up some idea, or obtain a little relief from his overpowering confusion.

"You knew Mr. Millingford, Romaine?" said the surprised and attentive Squire Ned.

"Well, yes, more or less, I 've known him for a good many years." And I made a little sign for the squire to take another time to push his inquiries.

Gradually our discomfited heir recovered his composure, although he did not resume his boastful, swaggering manners, and still I fancied eyed me with a little suspicious alarm.

"Poor, simple fellow," thought I, "does he fancy it will injure or better him for them to know that his mother was my mother's washerwoman, and that since I have had a man's work, he has been my errand boy? Rather it is for me to be disturbed by the change in our relations."

"I hope your mother is well, Mr. Millingford," said I, quietly setting the example, and recognizing the transformation of his fortunes.

He did not seem to hear me until I re-

peated my question, and then the same look of weak terror crossed his face.

"Yes, sir, she is pretty well. No, no; she is poorly now. She was n't able to come over with me. She won't come till after I 'm settled a while."

I took the first excuse offered to leave the room, and give him opportunity to recover from his perturbation. That night he drove over to Millingford Reach, the last formalities having made over to him that extensive and beautiful estate.

I pitied poor Squire Ned, as he wandered restlessly around his house that next day. Nothing I could urge or invent would assuage his disconsolate rebellion against the fate of his old comrade's home.

"I cannot think of him as my brave-spirited Raymond's son. That shallow-minded, stupid clown, who has gone down to Millingford Reach in such jaunty fashion. If only there had been the least flaw in the evidence he brought,—if only there was the faintest hope of ousting him,"—he repeated, again and again.

"Would you rather see John Jourdain the master?" asked I.

"No, no. But that refined, ladylike Eveline, and you, Romaine. You two established there would have satisfied my highest ambition."

"You are too kind to me, Squire Ned. Sometimes I stop to ask myself how it is possible I have come so completely identified with the interests and the people here. My American life seems to have been a dream, and England and Devon the real home of my spirit," returned I, with earnestness.

"I want you to stay with us, Romaine. You really seem to me like a very close connexion. I 've tried to puzzle out why it is I 'm so attracted toward you, but I don't exactly satisfy myself, unless by deciding that you are just the brave, steady, gallant young fellow I should hope to see my son, if I had one. You must not go back to America. I talked a bit with the colonel. He's set upon the mill, and you 'll hear from shortly. That will keep you busy a while."

The Squire was right. In a few days I received an earnest and cordial letter from Colonel Cathart, asking my help in getting up the new machinery, and giving into my hands the general supervision of the whole arrangement. The offer was too liberal to

be carelessly declined. Besides, my inclinations all urged me to remain, and I had not yet received an answer from Eveline Eaton. I was glad enough of any excuse to get back to Eglantine Terrace, and I made my return at an early day.

I found the family as kind and cordial as upon my first appearance. Catharine was a little shy and grave in my presence, but the reserve soon wore off. John Jourdain's name was scrupulously avoided. The colonel told me confidentially that the gentleman had lived in complete seclusion ever since the mortifying denouement at the Terrace, until very lately, when he heard of him as a close friend and boon companion of the new proprietor of Millingford Reach.

"How absurd!" commented I. "Nothing could be more preposterous than such a friendship. Jourdain must despise and ridicule such a simple, stupid nature as poor Joe's, and Joe must be sadly puzzled and perplexed by his deep and wily intellect. There is some motive, under the guise of friendship. If we wait patiently we shall discover it."

I met with one severe disappointment; Eveline was not at the Terrace. She had gone to Liverpool on an indefinite visit. I guessed something of her errand before a letter came.

"You must still pardon me, my kind friend," she wrote, "that I cannot give yet the answer you asked for. I must still struggle for light. I do not see clearly what is right, nor am I able to overcome the pride which refuses to receive all without being able to return ought. At least I ask for an untarnished name, and the proofs of my mother's lawful marriage, which Mr. John Jourdain has dared impeach. I am here in Liverpool, trying to find the missing links. There is some mystery about Nancy Lermont's refusal to testify in my behalf. She suffers keenly in my presence, and I am sure longs to be free to help me, but is restrained by some iron hand, and that hand who can doubt is John Jourdain's? The trouble, I fancy, has some connection with Johnny Lermont, her only son, who is represented to me as a bad, reckless boy, and who was recently in John Jourdain's service. I am told that you are to remain in England some length of time. If, then, you care to wait any longer, you shall have an

answer before you leave for America. I give you this information as so much consolation for the suspense. Had you asked me when I was so certain of my claim to the Millingford estate, you would have received a glad and unhesitating answer from,

"Yours in deepest esteem and friendship,
"EVELINE."

I read the letter thoughtfully, and could not find heart to be dissatisfied with it, because it was so much like the dear girl herself. Moreover, I did not find it so very discouraging upon re-perusal. I went, therefore, with a cheerful, hopeful mind to the new work appointed to me, and was soon deep in the problems of mechanism, of warp and loom, wheel and engine. And the weeks slipped away, and still Eveline was absent, and still I remained in trustful content, busy over the colonel's plans.

We heard frequently from Millingford Reach. The whole country was flooded with rumors of the wild doings there. Poor, simple Joe was going to ruin faster than ever now that he had become transformed into the master of that fine old house. He had yielded himself wholly to the evil counsels of the riotous companions who had gathered like vultures around him. Moved to compassion at the prospect for the poor, witless youth, we went over to make a call, Colonel Cathart and myself, intending to remonstrate seriously with him, and try to show him the folly of his conduct. The first face which confronted us was that of John Jourdain. He spared us the annoyance of conversation by rising from his seat beside the master of the house, and walking out of the room.

But we soon learned how completely his strong, subtle mind had obtained the mastery over the feeble intellect of this degenerate scion of the house of Millingford. He heard what we had to say without the indignation I had expected, but with cold impassiveness and incredulity.

"I can trust Mr. Jourdain. He's the right sort of a gentleman, so all the folks hereabouts tell me, and I do just as he tells me. Maybe I drink pretty good brandy, but it's a deuced pity if a man of fortune like me can't be allowed that much," he answered Colonel Cathart.

With me he was still uneasy and embarrassed. I fancied because he could not forget his old habit of subservient humility,

and did my best to help him overcome it by addressing him carefully by his new name, and with due respect.

He seemed conscious himself of his own formality, and awkwardly attempted to be confidential.

"I'm much obliged, I'm sure, Mr. Romaine, that you cared enough about me to come and speak about it. But you need n't be uneasy, because Mr. Jourdain's here, and he looks after me, and shows me what's the way a rich gentleman like me ought to behave. I'm going to steady down by and by. I'm thinking of looking after a wife, you see, and I've an idea I've found just the right sort of one, and it's not strange in me, either. I've been down to see her in Liverpool, and told her that she must make this her home, anyhow. She's a nice pretty girl, looks just like a lady, sir. Mr. Jourdain he says she's the right sort for the mistress here, but I'm not to say so until she's used to me. Jourdain says that's the style here in England. You and I don't know much about it. I tell you what, sometimes I think America's the place, after all. Perhaps some time I shall sell out and go home."

There was a little wistful, homesick cadence in the voice which touched me.

"You don't mean that you look upon America as your home, now that you are settled here in this charming place? Why, I have grown to feel as if Devon was the very spot in all the world where I belong, I like it so much. But you will feel more settled when your mother comes."

I wondered what had brought back that look of weak terror and alarm, and could not guess, as he faltered out, —

"My mother? Oh, I don't know. She won't come this year, any way. I've sent her home some money. She'll be a lady now, you know. You are going back to America pretty soon, a'n't you?"

"Not very soon. I've taken some business in hand which will keep me here some time. You'll hear about it pretty soon, when Colonel Cathart gets matters arranged."

What ailed the fellow? I was quite out of patience with him. He grew fairly blue about the mouth, and his eyes were as brimful of anguish and foolish terror as

such pale, expressionless pupils could show. What was it about his mother which touched him so keenly? I hastened to change the subject, and said, jocosely, —

"So there is already a young lady? Well, that's to be expected. I hope she will be a quiet, sensible gentlewoman, who will look after you and keep you steady."

He brightened again.

"I like her looks. She's all of that, a perfect lady, any fool could see. I have n't asked her yet, you know. I've only sent for her to come and live here. It's no more 'n her right."

I started, struck for the first time by a suspicion of the truth, and spoke as quietly as I could, —

"Perhaps I know her. Is her name Eveline?"

"That's it. What a feller you are, now, to guess. It's Miss Eveline Eaton, to be sure."

"And what has the young lady answered to your proposal?"

"I have n't got it, yet. Mr. Jourdain says it is n't time."

"Ah! indeed, so Mr. Jourdain is your mentor in love as well as law? Take care that he don't betray you in both."

While I spoke I heard a low rustle outside the window. It was partly unclosed, and in a moment I was aware that John Jourdain on the outside had listened to all our conversation. I meant he should have one thrust in a vulnerable part, so I said in a careless tone, —

"I doubt very much whether you will hear from Miss Eaton. It won't do to depend too strictly upon Mr. Jourdain's judgment. People think his brain is softening beneath those repeated attacks. Which does he have oftenest, now, catalepsy or the epileptic attacks?"

Satisfied as regarded Mr. Jourdain, after this last attack I made my adieux. That it took effect may be inferred from the circumstance that our visit was never returned, and that when we met the Millingford carriage the curtains were hastily pulled down, or the horses' heads turned in another direction.

I did not see the poor simple heir for two months again, and that meeting was our last.

THE HEIR OF MILLINGFORD REACH.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

[NO. 4.—TO BE COMPLETED IN FOUR NUMBERS.]

CHAPTER VIII.

I sent Eveline a full account of my visit to the owner of Millingford Reach, without any comments or suggestions for her own course of conduct. An answer came by return of post. She was in an unusually merry vein, and wrote gayly enough.

"Has fortune a particular spite against me, that she so 'tantalizingly holds up the gilded prize,' and continually snatches it away from my grasp? I do desire to possess Millingford Reach ardently and entirely. You see it is continually offered to me, and yet I am unable to gain it. I want the dear old house where my mother's girlhood passed so happily. I want the lovely sur-

roundings, the elegance, the refinement, the golden freedom from petty cares, the glorious opportunity to become the almoner of gracious bounty. All these I desire very much; but I do not want John Jourdain, nor his poor, simple *protege*, the genuine heir. What am I to do about it? Plainly there is no help for me. They say the third time never fails. Do you suppose there is a third heir anywhere, who will yet give me my desire, and not prove himself utterly obnoxious?

"But a truce to this nonsense. I saw Mr. Millingford, and directly fathomed the whole secret, and found out whose hand pulled the string. I thought it no harm to dissemble a little myself, since I had a pur-

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pose; and I have gained this much: I have discovered just the hold John Jourdain's iron hand has clenched upon poor Nancy Lermont. It is all to do with Johnny, as I suspected. He had written his master's name to get some money on a check, and Jourdain found it out. Quite likely he laid the trap, and the thoughtless boy walked into it. At all events, if Nancy gives her testimony for me, Johnny goes into prison. So I know very well it is useless to hope for any help of hers. She would be an unnatural mother to give it.

"Now you wonder, under all this discouragement, why I am so cheerful. Here is the sequel. I have found my mother's old pastor. He is almost blind and deaf and lame, and very much debilitated; but he has always kept a private journal, and in that precious, precious book is one page devoted to the ceremony which through his instrumentality made Richard Eaton and Ada Derna a lawfully married couple. If the page in the register is missing, this invaluable book gives every marriage, birth, and death which should be found recorded there. Later on its pages comes the register of the baptism of the infant daughter of Richard and Ada Eaton, with the name of Eveline.

"So you see I am happy, very, very happy, tonight. Let John Jourdain keep his Bird's Nest, and Mr. Raymond Millingford, poor simpleton! the dear old place and cozy fortune. I will be content with something better,—a true, honest heart, and tender love. Do you need any plainer speech, Ray, from
EVELINE?"

I was not sure that the good people of Eglantine Terrace would vouch for my sanity; nevertheless, after reading this letter, I dashed into the library, astonished Mrs. Cathart by upsetting a chair, and sweeping off an inkstand, overwhelmed the colonel with an incoherent sentence about Liverpool, and strictly private business, seized my hat, and was half-way to the railroad station before they could have recovered from their amazement.

Perhaps they understood it a little better when I returned, a few days after, escorting Miss Eaton, who was received as kindly as a daughter.

After the first greetings had been exchanged, the colonel inquired in an eager tone,—

"Have you heard from Millingford Reach?"

"Nothing whatever. Is there anything new?"

"Something very startling, and vitally interesting to Miss Eaton. That poor, wretched fellow has met with a terrible accident. He was thrown from a vicious horse, which, if he had had sense, would have been shot instead of mounted. From what I can learn, the hurt is fatal. I tried to get into the house; but John Jourdain and his minions have mounted guard, and no one is admitted. I am assured by the surgeon that the poor fellow has faithful care and a competent nurse; but, though he does not declare it positively, I infer he has no hopes of his recovery."

"Good heavens! Poor Joe! his enjoyment of that great fortune has been limited indeed."

"Yes; but one can hardly feel very sad about it. He would have ruined himself, and squandered the property. Now, if he dies, one can look back upon his memory with pity and forgetfulness. But, my dear fellow, do you not see the significance of the matter for Miss Eaton?"

"True. She is the next heir. I had forgotten. But you say John Jourdain is there. He will not plot in vain. She will lose it somehow."

"That is what I fear. I set Lawyer Brown to work to see what he could ferret out. And, by St. George! here he comes this minute.—Come in, Brown. Come in, and speak freely. We are all a family party, you see."

"Hem. I'm not used to meeting ladies at this hour. I am dusty with riding. I hope they'll excuse my looks," faltered the young lawyer, glancing somewhat nervously at the daintily arrayed daughters of Colonel Cathart.

The colonel laughed good-humoredly.

"Then we'll off to the library, if that's the only way to put you at ease. And you shall wash down the dust with a glass of port. But I must take one lady along with us. It's right Miss Eaton should hear what you have to tell."

At length we were quietly settled in the library; and there, at home amidst the books and papers, the attorney proceeded to tell us how much he had learned.

"I've had a confidential talk with the lawyer, who has been to the bedside of

young Mr. Millingford," said he; "and, although of course he would tell me nothing, I have deduced pretty decidedly from his remarks that a will has been made, and that Mr. John Jourdain will now be the heir of this Raymond Millingford. He hinted at pretty high-handed doings on Mr. Jourdain's part, even suggested foul play in the matter of the accident. It's certain that Jourdain encouraged the poor fellow to ride that vicious brute, and poured out for him glass after glass of wine just before they were ready to mount. These things don't count for much with the law, unless there is weightier evidence to bring with them; but they settle a man's opinion pretty decidedly. Unless you can bring some other influence to bear upon the dying man over there, I don't see but Mr. John Jourdain will have things his own way."

"The double-dyed villain!" muttered I angrily. "If we could only thwart him! What shall we do, Eveline?"

"Leave that poor, misguided boy to die in peace," answered Eveline gravely. "No efforts of yours can counteract the evil fascination of John Jourdain's influence. I saw enough of him at that one interview in Liverpool to show me how completely he was held by the wily spells of that man. He has played many desperate games to win this property: be sure, when he obtains it, he will find a curse comes with it. Let us think no more about it, Ray."

Her words were allowed to rule us. The lawyer returned to the town, and we severally went about our different avocations, trying to forget that so few miles away from us so solemn and momentous an experience was creeping toward the hapless youth, whose great possessions could not purchase a single moment's relief from pain, or ward away the approach of death.

I could see, through Eveline's assumed calmness, the restless excitement of her spirit. At every summons to the door she started nervously, and her eye was constantly wandering down the avenue toward the entrance-gate.

"You counsel, but you do not practice," said I chidingly. "You are chafing inwardly against this wrong, and it tries you more than if you spoke your thoughts freely."

She sighed heavily.

"I wonder if I am really so greedy and selfish? I cannot bear to give it up. It

sets every nerve quivering, every drop of blood burning along my veins, to think that John Jourdain will so soon have a right to the place that was meant for me after the Millingford's title was extinguished. I cannot help feeling that there is something yet to interpose. It surely is not from a mercenary spirit. It is for your sake more than for mine, dear Ray, that I long so ardently to possess Millingford Reach."

"Well, while there is life there is hope," I said; "but a very infinitesimal portion, I fear, in this case. I have just questioned a rider who is directly from the house. The young man is still alive, but a great sufferer, and beyond the possibility of recovery."

"Heaven rest his spirit!" said Eveline, dropping a tear of womanly compassion.

"If I could only see him again!" repeated I impatiently, as I returned again to my machinery.

My wish was gratified, little as I had dreamed of it; almost miraculously, as it seemed at the time.

At the dead midnight the whole household of the Terrace was startled from their sleep by a loud and peremptory summons to the great oaken door on the south side. I heard a muttering servant clattering down the stairs, and unbarring the door, grumbling all the while. Then came a quick return, and Colonel Cathart's voice, as he, too, descended. Only a few moments longer, and the colonel himself was at my door.

"Get up, Romaine," he said, in quick, excited tones, "and dress as quickly as possible. You are summoned over to the dying master of Millingford Reach. I'll tell you the rest in a few minutes. There's no time to lose, and I must call Miss Eaton too."

I sprang up, trembling in every limb with a nervous conviction of some impending revelation, and was presently down-stairs in the colonel's office. He was there, giving directions about the hasty getting out of the carriage. A strange young man in a livery was standing with a grave, earnest face, watching our movements.

"Pray be as quick as you can," he said. "The poor young man was so wild to see you, and he was failing fast."

"To see Miss Eaton?" questioned I.

"No, sir," the man said, to my wonder: "to see you. But the colonel said he wanted Miss Eaton too when I told him how he

gasped out that the right one must have the property."

"Why did n't you come yesterday?" I inquired, while I folded a shawl around the pale, silent Eveline, who made her appearance as if emerging from a nightmare dream, with wild eyes and white cheeks.

"Ah! faith, sir, and that was what could n't be done. They don't give him credit enough. The poor young master was sharp enough to see how it would be. He kept it all a secret, and waited till Mr. Jourdain had gone to bed, leaving him with the watchers. You'd never get to him if Mr. Jourdain knew. He whispered to me as if he wanted water, and I sent the other watcher for it, and the nurse was asleep. Then he took hold of my hand as if the poor, weak fingers were made of iron, and whispered out so hoarse, —

"'A hundred pounds, Dugald, if you will get Mr. Romaine from Colonel Cathart's over here into this room as soon as you can. Bring the colonel too. The right one must have the property. You understand, good Dugald? You know what I want?'

"I see in a minute just what he wanted, and says I, —

"'Yes, sir. Don't you fret. I'll have it done.'

"How he tried to smile at me, and then fell back, worn out! I slipped down-stairs with an excuse, crept out to the stable, led out old Dick, and mounted him bareback; and you're to go back with me, and leave the carriage outside, and get in as still as possible. Only don't lose time. Mr. Jourdain comes in every night to look at him, and he's like the Evil One himself to scent out any mischief."

We did not need any urging, but hurried to the carriage, and made but one pause, to procure a proper officer to witness or execute any declaration or instrument the dying man might desire.

How grim and ghostly rose the walls of the great mansion! How weird and solemn were the shadows of the trees as we crept up the narrow path in the pale starlight, and followed Dugald to the rear door he had left unfastened for our admittance!

I held Eveline's cold hand in mine, and felt it tremble. But somehow it was just the contrary with me. The moment I crossed the threshold all agitation left me. I was calm, resolute, buoyed up by a new but profound peace.

There was no time for me to analyze the sentiment. Softly and cautiously Dugald led the way across the wide, marble-flagged hall, from whose sombre niches warrior and knight kept guard, in full armor, and seemed to waive us on with stately benediction. One by one, with hushed breath, and scarcely beating hearts, we mounted the grand staircase, and groped through the upper halls.

Faithful Dugald was the most relieved of all when he turned the silver handle of a chamber door, and ushered us into a dressing-room, silent and deserted, but dimly lighted by a single candle. He made a signal for us to wait, went into the next room on tip-toe, and returned in an instant, beckoning us to follow.

The scene which opened to us with the swinging door was one never to be forgotten. The great, sumptuously furnished chamber looked mockingly grand in contrast to the pitiful, haggard face, the bruised, writhing form stretched upon the white bed-clothing, the wretched remorse and anguish which spoke in every gesture and lineament.

A small table covered with vials and powders stood near the bed, and beside it sat the gaunt, erect figure of the nurse, and over at the carved, massive foot-board, from which the crimson silk trimmings had been looped away, leaned the grave, attentive watcher, who looked up in utter amazement when our little party noiselessly entered the sick room. He made a movement as if to waive us back, but was restrained by a whispered word from Dugald, and stood looking over to us with a puzzled and indignant face.

But my eye had not left that terribly changed face upon the pillow. How ghastly and wan it was! The cold shadows of death had already settled upon it. An unutterable compassion came into my heart. I stole softly to the bedside, and spoke to him, quite unconscious that I had adopted the old address.

"Joe, poor Joe! you've met with a terrible accident."

The leaden eyelids were raised stiffly, a feeble gleam of relief chased off the scared, affrighted look, as his glance wandered from face to face, and came back again to mine with wistful earnestness.

"You have come, Mr. Romaine? Oh, I am so glad of that! It will give me a chance

for a little peace. Dugald is a good fellow: he's to have a hundred pounds for this. You won't mind paying it, will you? Dugald; lock the door: nobody's to come into the room now."

These words had cost him a great effort, and given much pain. He paused, panting and groaning. The nurse poured out half a wine-glass of some strengthening cordial, and gave it to him. He drank it slowly, and then rested a while.

Except for the click of the key in the lock, as Dugald complied with his request, there was profound silence in the room, and every eye was turned to that anguished, ghastly face lying among the pillows. He seemed to heed my presence alone, and presently burst forth with a flood of tears, and a childish, terrified appeal in his anguished voice, —

"O Mr. Romaine! Mr. Romaine! I wish I never had left America!"

"Poor fellow! poor Joe!" was all I could articulate.

"You know — you've heard" — with a pitiful wall.

"Yes: it was a terrible accident."

"And I've got to die. O Mr. Romaine! do you think these English doctors understand as well as ours? Might n't it be possible to help me? If it only was, I'd do so different. I'd be good: I know I should be good."

"Poor Joe! poor Joe!"

"You think there's no help then? O Lord — O Lord! have mercy!" shrieked he, in the wild terror of death, which even strong minds have yielded to.

He writhed and panted on the bed before our awe-struck gaze, then fell into a desperate calm.

"Mr. Romaine, I went once to a Sunday school over the water there at home, and there was a great card hung up before our bench. I can see it now, the great black letters on the staring white pasteboard. Oh! if I'd have minded it before it was too late! 'The Wages of Sin is Death.' That's what it said. O Lord, O Lord! have mercy! Mr. Romaine, that's what I've got. Death, death! And to think I've earned it myself! O dear, O dear! why did I ever leave America? O mother! how could you?"

"I would try and keep as calm as possible," said I, gently. "You want me to take some message to your mother?"

"No, I don't!" almost shrieked he, in a high, fierce tone. "She's to blame for all, and it's she ought to be here a-dying. You just tell her that 'The Wages of Sin is Death.' Mr. Romaine, do you believe there is a burning pit down — down under the grave?"

I shivered beneath the wild agony of the glazed eye.

"I believe in a merciful Father, and a loving, pitiful Saviour," answered I. "If we have done wrong, and are truly sorry, and ready to make all amends in our power" —

"That's it, that's it. I must make up for it, I know. Quick! some of you write out a paper for me to sign just as I tell you now," he cried, eagerly, trying to raise his head.

I lifted it tenderly, and the officer of the law, whom we had fortunately brought with us, immediately came forward with paper, pen, and ink. Joe's glazing eyes followed his movements with feverish interest.

"Write just as I speak," directed he. "I, Joseph Miller, born in New York City, United States, in the year 1830, do hereby declare, on my dying bed, that I have falsely sworn and testified to obtain the estate of Millingford Reach."

A dead pause, broken only by his gasping breath and a low cry from Eveline.

"Go on!" cried the officer, glancing at the row of startled faces.

"I am not Raymond Millingford. My mother stole a box containing all the proofs and evidence which I have brought forward, I cannot tell how many years ago, from the drawer of a poor sick lady for whom she worked. She took them for the trinkets, and did not know of the value of the papers until I came to read them over. We saw the advertisement in the paper asking for the heirs of Raymond Millingford, and I remembered the name, and got out the box again. As I lay, a dying man, I swear it was mother, and not me, who first thought of passing poor Joe Miller off for the heir of the great property in England. When she talked it over, I was afraid. I said I could never carry it out; that I was too dull and stupid, and all that. But she laughed at me, and then she was angry with me. She showed me how little was to be done, anyhow; that the papers and miniature we held was all I needed; and how there was

none as could say a word against my being the right man, — especially as the true one knew not the least sign of it, as one of the letters from his mother showed. She had never breathed a breath of it to him, but just written this letter telling him the whole story, and put it with the proof, for him to have when she was dead. You know the advertisement had not come out then, and the old man who lived here was alive. O Lord, O Lord! I've got to meet him too! I never thought of that before."

He had spoken with feverish haste, though with panting breath and in broken pauses. Another paroxysm of anguish and terror completely exhausted him.

"Joe, Joe, you are doing your best to retrieve your wrong-doing. You are sincerely penitent. Pray for Heaven's forgiveness, and surely you may hope the prayer will be heard," said I, in profound sympathy for the agony of mind which far exceeded, one could see, the great suffering of the bruised, battered body.

"Do you think so? O Mr. Romaine, pray for me!" he whispered.

"I will, I will, my poor Joe. But finish first this act of restitution, and you shall have a clergyman."

"No, no; I want your prayers, your forgiveness; that is best. Give me something to drink. I must finish soon. I am so cold now, so horribly cold! Does it mean — O Lord, have mercy on my soul! — does it mean that death is coming?"

I gave him drop after drop of wine, the nurse holding his head. It gave him a brief return of strength. He motioned for us all to come nearer.

"Let me tell the rest. I came to England alone. My mother staid behind, because she could n't say but some one here had seen Mrs. Millingford. I got the property; but, oh! I swear to you here, I've never known a minute's peace. Every new face I have seen has scared me. O Mr. Romaine, when you showed yourself I was nearly dead with fright. I thought you had found it out."

"Speak to the point, if you can. Let us have the whole story," said the writer, dipping his pen afresh into the pocket-inkstand.

"I have made a will. I would n't have done it, only I wanted a little peace, and I knew it could n't harm anything. Poor Joe Miller has nothing to give away. I've

nothing to say against Mr. Jourdain, though, may be, he's helped this along. I can see clearer now. It was n't just the best thing for me to drink so much brandy, nor to ride that wild horse, though he dared me to it. I won't say he was in a hurry to have the property. I'm too wicked myself to throw any stones. But you'll all testify, that he can't have the property, because it belongs to the true Raymond Millingford."

"And who is he? Where can we find him?" asked Colonel Cathart.

But he had closed his eyes, and was struggling with the agonies of the approaching dissolution. His previous speaking had completely exhausted him. He lay panting, palpitating, and the question did not seem to reach his dulled ears.

"We must know that. It will be unpardonable in us to allow that question to be unanswered," said the officer of the law.

"Joe, Joe," said I, in a pitiful tone.

He lifted the stiff eyelids, and looked into my face bewilderedly. The flash of strength which intense earnestness had lent to him was dying out rapidly. The springs of life were ebbing swiftly. I bent over him in alarm.

"Try to think, to finish your good work, Joe. Where shall we find him — the true heir — Raymond Millingford?"

A slow perception of my meaning crossed the face, which took a gray, ashy pallor beyond its previous ghastliness. He made a desperate effort to command the stiffening muscles.

"Don't — you — know? Don't — you — see? Forgive me, Mr. Ray. Mother has got the letter for you."

Even while he spoke there came the terrible death-rattle in his throat; he gasped twice; the head sunk deeper into the pillows, then all was still, and poor Joe Miller's eventful life was ended here on earth. Shuddering from head to foot, I turned away.

Two slender white hands caught mine, and a pair of soft, tender eyes, swimming with tears, looked up into my face.

"Ray, Ray, do you know that I shall accept the third offer? The true heir will give me Millingford Reach."

"I do not see — I am bewildered, distressed. What do you imagine, Eveline?"

"I do not imagine: it is a genuine conviction. How many times Squire Ned has declared you reminded him of his friend.

Your name, too — we have been stupid not to see it before."

"Speak plainly, Eveline: you torture me."

"So blind, Ray? Did you not take his meaning when he asked your forgiveness? It was from your mother they stole the papers. Her letter for you, he said, was in his mother's hands. It will explain all. O Ray, Ray! you are the son of Raymond Millingford. You are the true heir of Millingford Reach. I know it, I rejoice in it."

It broke upon me then and there overwhelmingly. I sat down, giddy and faint with the great revelation, profoundly glad, and yet stirred only by grave and solemn thoughts, while the others were talking in low, excited whispers. I went back to the bedside, and wept a few pitying tears on the dead face of the brief usurper of my rights. His strange, inexplicable embarrassment in my presence was thoroughly explained now. So too, as by a lightning flash, many tangled threads in my remembrance of my mother's conduct: her words and looks were woven into a legible pattern. My failure to find any Romaines in Devon, the utter silence about my English relatives, the mysterious promise of future revelations, — all things were clear.

And I was standing in my grandfather's house. A thrill shot through my heart at the recollection. A proud, glad consciousness that it was my house now, beyond the help or hindrance of such as John Jourdain, followed.

I murmured a tender, pardoning word into the ears dumb to earthly sounds, and softly followed Colonel Cathart's beckoning hand, without comprehending why the room was so suddenly cleared.

They told me afterward how Dugald had been on the watch, and hastily reported John Jourdain's approach; and how the Colonel, anxious to save the new discovery for another day's revelation, had hastened us all from the room, and warned the attendants there against reporting what had transpired during the past few hours.

We took leave silently, as we had come, and carried away with us the all-important statement of the dying man.

We had very little talk among ourselves that night. What we had heard and witnessed was too solemnly impressive for many words. Colonel Cathart only said, as he wrung my hand for good-night, —

"I long to tell Squire Ned of this. I think nothing else could insure for him such felicity, outside his own family, as to see you and Eveline established at Millingford Reach."

CHAPTER IX.

The news of the untimely death of the so lately established master of Millingford Reach was abroad early the next day. Dugald came over to tell me how Mr. Jourdain had sent for the lawyer who drew up the useless will, and had given out all the directions for a costly and pompous funeral. The attendants at the death-bed had kept discreet silence, possibly from interested motives, since so well informed concerning the real owner of the place.

We despatched a post messenger for Squire Ned, and, when he arrived, took his counsel, and decided to make no revelation of the change in affairs until after the funeral. The Liverpool steamer was about sailing, and a trusty man was sent out to New York to obtain Mrs. Miller's testimony and the precious letter so long withheld from me.

We drove over to the house of mourning at the appointed hour, and found room and grounds thronged by an inquisitive, speculating crowd. John Jourdain, in deepest crape, glowered upon us, as, with Eveline on my arm, and Squire Ned and Colonel Cathart close at hand, I entered the room set apart for the mourners. I saw him shade his eyes with his white, aristocratic hand, to hide the evil sparkle of triumph, so ill according with the presence of that still, silent corpse beneath the velvet pall.

My own heart was too sorrowfully thoughtful of poor Joe Miller's wasted life to be exultant at my knowledge of the downfall awaiting my rival. I heard only the solemn responses, the sacred words, of the liturgy.

We had been told that the body was to be placed in the receiving tomb, and therefore had not molested any of John Jourdain's arrangements. We saw the poor, obscure American laid placed amid the costly wrecks of the proud old English coffins; and certainly, if it did not stir those senseless heaps of ashes, it brought no thrill of ire or shame to the heart of the sole surviving Millingford, that plebeian bones had come to moulder there.

The funeral rites ended, we returned to the great mansion. The executors of the late Ralph Millingford's will, and the lawyer who drew it up, as well as the gentleman who had taken down and witnessed Joe Miller's confession, joined our party as we walked composedly toward the great library.

A cold sneer was perceptible on John Jourdain's finely chiseled lips, and a malignant light glimmered across his baleful eyes.

"The will of the late Raymond Millingford is not yet made public," said he, rising from his seat, and standing at his haughty height before us. "For that reason I will tolerate this intrusion. Squire Kirkwood, perhaps these people will be interested to hear it read."

"We have no further interest than curiosity," said Squire Ned bluntly; "but we will listen respectfully, for the sake of the testator."

The lawyer, with a little aside nod toward our lawyer, Nickerson, unfolded the parchment, and read the brief instrument which bequeathed to John Jourdain the entire property held in possession by the testator.

A dead silence followed when his dry, rasping tones had ceased. It was broken by John Jourdain's clear, melodious voice, smooth with polite irony.

"You perceive, good people, the state of affairs. Another time I may be pleased to see some of you in this house: at present, I desire to be left in possession of my own apartments. I can imagine the disappointment of certain parties who counted so strongly upon coming into possession here; but I assure them that the instrument they have just heard read is without a flaw, and amply secured by every possible legal measure."

I turned toward him calmly, pressing lightly the black-gloved hand which still clung to my arm, to assure Eveline that I was not in the least disturbed from my self-command.

"There is but one flaw, Mr. Jourdain," I said. "The will itself may be made fast by witness, seal, and signature; but Joseph Miller had no claim upon Millingford Reach, and his bequest is therefore a simple farce."

"Joseph Miller! What have we to do with Joseph Miller? I am talking about Raymond Millingford."

"Raymond Millingford has not yet arrived to that extremity," I replied gravely and calmly still; "but, when his last will and testament is executed, it will not be your name, John Jourdain, which will be linked with Millingford Reach."

"What gibberish is this?" he demanded in a high, sharp tone.

"It means," said Lawyer Nickerson, stepping forward at a gesture from me, "that it is your turn to listen to the last, dying words of the poor youth who has just been carried to his grave. The witnesses are all present when you call in the nurse and one of your own servants who was a watcher at the bed of death."

As he spoke, he took from Colonel Cathart the confession of Joseph Miller, and read it aloud.

John Jourdain meanwhile stood glaring at him with staring eyes and set lips. He did not attempt to deny the statement, which confirmed me in my belief of his knowledge of the imposture; but he hissed out, —

"So this vexed question is still to be thrust to and fro! So there is another heir to make his appearance! Well, produce him. I demand that much."

"He is here," said Squire Ned triumphantly; "and he bears the surest proof in his face. Look there, and here."

Saying which, he drew me before a picture of my father hanging beside one of my grandfather, and pointed from one to the other, and then into my face.

"Perdition!" came seething over John Jourdain's lips, as he turned upon me with a lightning glance. "May the curses of!" —

The words died out in a choking gasp, a white line of foam oozed up to his lips, and he fell back in the writhing convulsions of epilepsy.

We had him tenderly cared for; but the attack, Antoine averred, was beyond anything he had ever witnessed.

"He will not rest, he is foaming, fretting, chafing all the time," muttered the valet disconsolately; "and it will be the death of him. Every one of them leaves him worse and worse. It won't be long that he can see company at all."

He was not far from right, — the faithful, sagacious Frenchman. When John Jourdain came out of the attack, he was too weak to be moved; and, before full

strength returned, another seizure prostrated him.

Well, he never left Millingford Reach. It was his home, after all. But he had his punishment meted out as relentlessly as his worst enemy could have asked, and the blow fell upon the most vulnerable part. He who had so pitilessly forced down any sign of illness, who had shrunk with such proud sensitiveness from the imputation of ill health, became a feeble, helpless invalid, a confirmed epileptic, in the sight of all the

world. We forgot our old horror and detestation in the sight of all his suffering; and, in the months and years which ensued, he had no more tender nurse than Eveline, despite his wrongs and insults in the past, no more sympathizing friend than the one who was made, by the arrival from America of the widow Raymond Millingford's last letter of explanation, and a full confession of the conscience-stricken Mrs. Miller, the true and undisputed owner of Millingford Reach.